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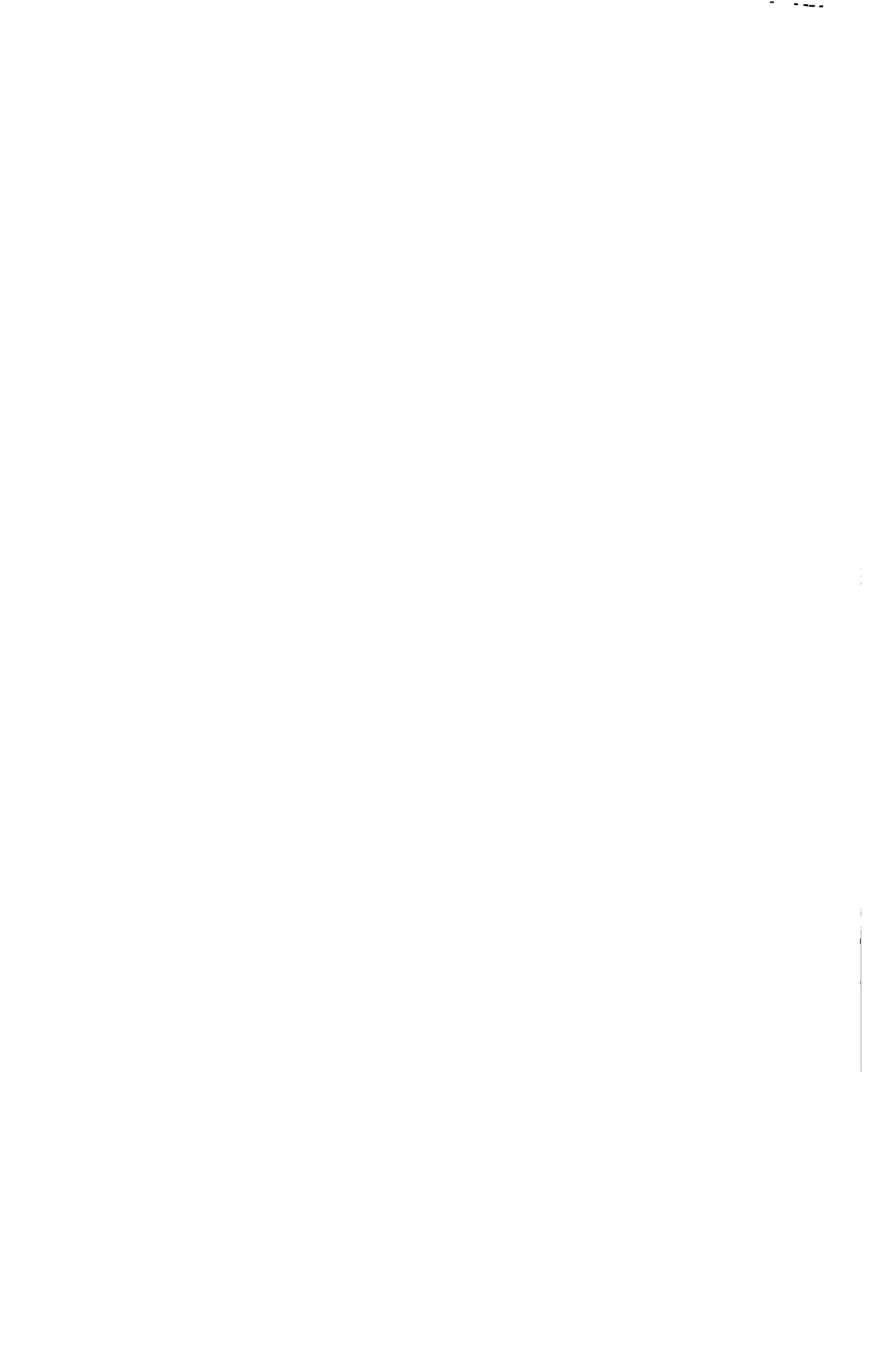
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A TRANSFORMED COLONY



11703



PALM-LEAF HAMPERS

These hampers are admirably adapted for overland transport along the narrow paths. Though so fragile looking they are extremely strong, and it is surprising how much can be packed into them. The contents of the hampers represented above are palm kernels.

A Transformed Colony

SIERRA LEONE

*AS IT WAS, AND AS IT IS
ITS PROGRESS, PEOPLES, NATIVE CUSTOMS
AND UNDEVELOPED WEALTH*

BY

T. J. ALLDRIDGE, I.S.O., F.R.G.S.

*Formerly Travelling Commissioner in the Upper Mendi Country and for many years
District Commissioner of the Sherbro in the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone
Author of "The Sherbro and its Hinterland"*

WITH SIXTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP

PHILADELPHIA

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FORMERLY
VICEROY OF INDIA
AND
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

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PREFACE

THIS book is, in the main, a record of my personal experiences, for a very large part of my life has been spent in the Colony of Sierra Leone. As Travelling Commissioner, I had to do pioneer work in opening up and in mapping out the far distant and then unknown parts of the Hinterland; and on behalf of the Government I made many treaties with the paramount chiefs.

For some years I was the only white man known in the Upper Mendi country, and am still, I believe, the only European official who has travelled round the entire area of what is now the Protectorate. Quite recently I have visited much of the ground I went over in earlier times, to find, in many cases, improvements that would have been inconceivable to me had I not witnessed them.

I am glad to be able to add to my own observations some accounts of the ethnological and official work of others, long since gone before, who, in those darker days, did so much to collect authentic information concerning the numerous tribes of the remoter regions through which they travelled.

From their work and my own, often carried through with extreme difficulty, it became very apparent that in the interests of the people, and for the development of the country's bountiful indigenous wealth, the Government must take definite steps towards pacifying the various tribes and establishing a new state of things in which, under British Protection, the people would be able to enjoy life and be free from that shocking terrorism which was the perpetual condition of their existence until the creation of the Protectorate in 1896.

Few Europeans conversant with the Colony as it was when I first landed there, are now living, and that small number is rapidly diminishing. It seems therefore important that trust-

worthy records should be collected, delineating the recent past as it really was, and tracing the steps by which the Government, through the judicious policy of the Colonial Office, aided by the administrative abilities of the Governors, has transformed a lawless and slave-dealing country into one of security and freedom. Not only has the reign of terror been ended, but the autocratic powers of the chiefs over life and death have been done away with, and a Protectorate created over the entire Hinterland. Through a part of this for 227 miles runs an excellent railway, bringing an area of some 40,000 square miles and a native population roughly estimated at between one and two millions of people under complete official control.

Much of this has really been effected within the last dozen years. How so extraordinary a change in so short a time has been carried out is still a wonder to many, myself amongst the number. Much more, of course, has to be accomplished, but civilising influences have been brought into operation; and future administrators, with the interests of the natives at heart, should have no difficulty in building upon so solid a foundation a very sound fabric of social well-being and commercial prosperity, and of well-nigh, if not altogether, effacing the opprobrium which has so long rested on the name of Sierra Leone.

I am greatly indebted to the widow of my friend and fellow Travelling Commissioner, the late Mr. G. H. Garrett, for permitting me to use the original log of his difficult and memorable expedition to the late Almami Samodu; and for allowing me to reproduce many illustrations from his beautiful and unique negatives.

My thanks are likewise tendered to Major D'Arcy Anderson, District Commissioner of the Ronietta District in the Sierra Leone Protectorate, for his very interesting description of the steatite figures known as the "Numori," which he was kind enough to write expressly for this book.

The Rev. R. P. Dougherty, M.A., Principal of the Albert Academy, Freetown, has also been good enough specially to take for me some of the views of that city here reproduced.

PREFACE

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The authorities at the War Office have most courteously sanctioned the use of the accompanying official map, showing the route of the Government railway and the enormous area that still requires modern methods of communication.

I cannot close these introductory remarks without gratefully alluding to the invaluable assistance that I have received from my wife, who on two occasions shared my privations and hardships in West Africa, and who has acted as my amanuensis. Her retentive memory has enabled me to recall incidents that would otherwise have escaped my recollection.

T. J. ALLDRIDGE.

HARTING, PETERSFIELD, HANTS,
11th December 1909.

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THE AUTHOR

Mr. U

A TRANSFORMED COLONY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

I SUPPOSE that there are occasions in the life of every Briton when the paucity of adjectives in the English language will be forced upon him. That, at any rate, is my own feeling as I attempt to qualify with one word my astonishment at the recent changes in the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone.

After much thinking I have been obliged to come to the conclusion that there is no one adjective strong enough to convey my sentiments on this subject. I might, it is true, fall back upon Dominie Sampson's "pro-di-gious," but even this would not adequately express the degree of amazement experienced on a tour from which I have recently returned; a tour specially undertaken that I might re-visit those remote parts of the Hinterland which, as Travelling Commissioner, directed by the Government, I had opened up by means of friendly treaties with the paramount chiefs.

In those days, barely twenty years ago, that Hinterland was geographically unknown; what it is now I hope to make plain in the following pages.

As for Sierra Leone proper, it has been a Crown Colony for over one hundred years, having been transferred to the Crown in 1807 by the Sierra Leone Company, who originally, in 1787, founded Freetown, the capital, as a refuge for liberated slaves.

During the greater part of that century the Colony has progressed certainly, but progressed very slowly. For a long while stagnation settled down heavily upon it. The shocking

reputation of its deadly climate was undoubtedly the great barrier to advancement. Development appeared to be out of the question; and many of us, who knew the Colony thirty or even forty years ago, must very well remember that when we returned from a residence on its pestilential coast our friends gazed upon us with wonder, as if they regarded our coming home alive as scarcely less than a miracle.

That reputation was undoubtedly deserved, and no one would presume to say that even now, although the coast is vastly improved, it is without its special dangers to health and life.

The disease common to Sierra Leone, formerly known as malarial fever, is now better understood, thanks to the exhaustive researches of Sir Patrick Manson, Major Ronald Ross, the Hon. W. T. Prout, late Principal Medical Officer of Sierra Leone, and the London and Liverpool Schools of Tropical Medicine.

Sanitation has, however, not yet received the attention that its great importance to life demands. There has been an enormous improvement in the water supply, but main drainage is still absent, and until a radical change is effected in this particular, the place can never be free from outbreaks of disease; for without hygienic conditions health is impossible; but we will consider this subject later.

The stagnation period has now definitely passed away. The British Government has at length been aroused to a sense of the importance of its West African possessions; urged on, no doubt, largely by the eagerness displayed by other European nations to acquire a firm footing on the African continent. It may, however, be regretted that the stagnation lasted as long as it did.

When I first went to the Coast in 1871, the partition of West Africa had hardly been thought about. Great Britain could then have easily acquired a very large amount of territory, but extension was not in those days considered desirable by our Government. Our neighbour France, however, ardently wished to increase her small African possessions; and she has quietly but steadily been working to her own great advantage,

to such an extent that our Colony and Protectorate are now entirely hemmed in by Guinée Française, the French Sudan, and the negro Republic of Liberia, and any extension of our Hinterland beyond the Anglo-French boundaries is definitely stopped.

With the boundary delimitation the trade caravans from the far interior—which had previously come into Freetown during the early months of each dry season, bringing down quantities of raw gold, ivory, and cattle—were diverted to the French ports, particularly to the large and flourishing port of Konakri, only seventy miles by sea from Freetown.

In spite of this drastic curtailment of trade, the Hinterland of Sierra Leone has, by the wise and progressive policy of the Government in opening up communication by means of a railway, become a very valuable asset of the Sierra Leone Colony, as the continuously increasing revenue shows.

It may be well to notice, before going further, the changes in the West African Governments during my connection with the Coast.

When I arrived at Sierra Leone in 1871, the Governor was the late Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy, who was the Governor-in-Chief of the "West Africa Settlements" as they were then styled. These Settlements included the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and the Gold Coast as far as Lagos.

After the Ashanti War in 1873-74, under Sir Garnet, now Viscount Wolseley, the Settlements were divided. The Gold Coast and Lagos were created one Government, while the Gambia remained under Sierra Leone. In 1886 there was another change—Lagos became a separate Government; and subsequently, in 1888, the Gambia was severed from Sierra Leone and administered its own affairs. All these Governments, however, remain Crown Colonies, and to them must now be added the enormous territories composing Northern and Southern Nigeria, with which last-named Government Lagos is now incorporated.

Sierra Leone is thus left entirely to herself; but notwithstanding this, as I hope I shall be able to show, she is quite capable of holding her own.

CHAPTER II

FREETOWN

OFTEN as I have approached the peninsula of Sierra Leone after an outward passage, and never without fresh admiration for its natural beauties, the charm of the situation appealed to me more than ever on my last visit, when, as it happened to be at the height of "the dries," everything was at its utmost brilliancy. The heat was intense, but to me that tropical heat acts as a restorative, although on many others it has quite an opposite effect.

After several days on the open sea the mountains of Sierra Leone are eagerly looked for. Presently those who are scanning the horizon receive the impression of what they take to be "the loom of the land."

Gradually the impression becomes a certainty; minute by minute the scene develops, and the distant mountains become faintly visible, rapidly gaining distinctness.

After a while the lighthouse on Cape Sierra Leone appears, towards which the steamer makes a bee line.

The steamer has now to be navigated with the greatest caution, because the slightest divergence from the course on the starboard side would probably head her on to a most dangerous reef known as the Carpenter Rock. At low water the sea breaks over this rock, and I have myself seen the wrecks of two fine steamers, the *Nigretia* and the *Monrovia*, on it. The *Nigretia*, a beautiful new boat, after sitting perfectly parallel, and to all appearances undamaged, on the rock for some months, sank one night, and can now be seen under the water; the other, more seriously damaged and much worse placed, went down very quickly.

On the port side another danger presents itself in the shape

of the Middle Ground, a sandbank on which I have seen stranded a large mail-steamer, which would undoubtedly have been wrecked had it not been for the expedition with which the lightening of the vessel was effected; this being possible, as the bank is quite near the port.

Owing to these dangers, and the shallowness of the water, we give the coast a wide berth. In hazy weather, when landmarks cannot be made out, the steamer may easily over-run the distance and have to return as soon as the mistake is discerned.

This is a thing that sometimes happens in spite of the great precautions taken in sounding.

During the harmattans, in December, January, and February, we can scarcely see even a very few yards about us, and consequently the danger then is greatly enhanced.

Having made the Cape safely, the vessel is turned towards the broad estuary of the Sierra Leone, or, more properly, the Rokel river, and proceeds for five miles to Freetown, running quite close to the shore in deep water. Here we get a fine view of the beautiful mountainous background, the mountains approaching very near the sea.

We pass charming little bays and inlets, hillsides dotted with bungalows, half hidden among feathery cocoa-nut trees and wide-leaved bananas, while the tall and graceful oil-palm, the king of the country, towers above all other forms of vegetation. We meet many dug-out canoes, in which natives are fishing in every sort of position. Some will be lying in the canoe holding the line with their toes, their feet over the gun-wales, for they can fish as well with their toes as with their fingers.

If it should be market day, numbers of Susu canoes, with their enormous sprit sails, will be seen crossing over from the opposite Bullom shore, seven miles away. A fleet of them may be passing near our bows. The stern will be crowded with coloured people and the rest of the boat crammed with the provisions they are taking to the Freetown market. Nowadays, with the greatly increased number of European residents in the town, everything in the way of garden or dairy produce

finds an immediate sale, as the demand largely exceeds the supply.

As our steamer approaches the anchorages we can see the great waterside market at King Jimmy's wharf to which the canoes will bring their produce, and a babel of tongues will tell us how eagerly the crowds of Sierra Leone women traders are competing for anything and everything that is to be had.

Well, at last we arrive, to find six or eight other steamers, and one or two American sailing ships in port. We anchor immediately opposite the Government wharf and the Custom House, upon which the Cathedral looks down from higher ground, its massive tower being a conspicuous object.

A flotilla of small boats is plying between the shore and the steamer, their dusky occupants competing for passenger and baggage as eagerly as the market women for the contents of the Susu canoes. From one of these boats a courteous coloured gentleman or two, speaking excellent English, will board our steamer and will open out, not only a very excellent selection of the postcards of local scenes, which we are sure to want, but will have been so thoughtful as to have with him the necessary stamps.

Of course we are thankful for this new convenience; the Blue Peter is already flying on the homeward-bound steamer at anchor in the harbour, but we shall now be just in time to send our letters alongside to be posted in the ship's letter-box, and some one in England will be spared several days of anxious waiting. Not long ago we should have had the trouble and expense of hurrying on shore, toiling in the burning sun up to the post-office, where we should arrive probably wringing wet from perspiration (at least I certainly should), to procure a plain card and the stamp.

I call special attention to this, because, although we may have seen the same sort of thing at other ports, it is only of late that selling picture postcards on the steamers at Sierra Leone has been introduced, and for me it marks a great advance, as it is now recognised in civilised countries as being one of the most up-to-date and necessary requirements of all travellers in whatever part of the world they may be.

The landing at Freetown, however, is just as primitive as ever as regards the boats. Those who remember the beautifully clean craft of Madeira and the Canary Islands will probably regard the Freetown boats as a disgrace to the Colony, and I quite agree with them, for frailer and more wretched conveyances we could hardly see anywhere. The only improvement upon the earlier times is, that there is now less confusion, as the boatmen are licensed and the fare is fixed.

In spite, however, of the bad boats, we land comfortably in still water all the year round, and at a wharf. This is the enormous advantage that Sierra Leone has over every other place, so far as I know, on the surf-beaten West Coast, except Bathurst, Gambia, where there is also a Government wharf, and where the facilities for landing are even better, as there the steamer comes in right alongside. If you have ever landed in a surf-boat you will appreciate a wharf when you see one. It is a great thing to land dry.

From the harbour the long panoramic view of Freetown, set against its background of mountains, is very fine. The town itself, crowded with houses, rises on a gentle slope up to the very foot of the high mountains that encompass it on three sides. Of these the Sugar Loaf is the most conspicuous, rising to 2,496 feet. Beyond the waterside market, at which we have just seen the Susu canoes unloading, is the Imperial battery of heavy guns at King Tom's point; beyond again the open country and the sea.

On the other side of the wharf are fine large mercantile buildings and the offices of the Eastern Telegraph, immediately adjoining which are the masked guns of the Eastern Battery.

When I first went out, the ground on which this battery stands was a broad green sward, the European rendezvous where we used to meet up for talk and for the chance of getting a breeze from the sea. In those days the Colony was not fortified in the modern acceptance of the term; there were no large guns in Sierra Leone then.

The block of Tower Hill barracks, on an elevation at the back of the town, was formerly the most striking object seen from the harbour. They were then the only barracks, but

they commanded, and still command, the principal streets of the town. They are now supplemented by fine and extensive barracks at a much greater height at Mount Oriel and at Kortright Hill on the one side, and on the other by the cantonment of the West African Regiment at Wilberforce.

Round the point on which stands the Eastern Battery is Susan's Bay, a shipping place for produce, and where is also the coaling depot. Beyond, on a low cliff and next the water's edge, is the beautiful little "Princess Christian Mission Hospital," close to which is Bishop's Court, a charming residence in charming grounds, with, when I last saw it, the front of its deep verandas one mass of purple from the terminal leaves of the bougainvillea.

Beyond Bishop's Court, standing out boldly on the skyline, is the massive block of Fura Bay College, the last building that meets the eye in that direction.

On the water-line the Government wharf occupies the principal site, and on to this wharf now runs, by a steep curve, that part of the railway used for carrying material for its maintenance and further extension and for goods traffic. Everything to do with the railway is of course quite modern. It is distinctly Governmental work, but by no means the only public improvement undertaken by the Government visible from the harbour. Just beyond the wharf there has been a great excavation of the hard granite rock, and on this site the fine and very large new Customs warehouses have just been completed at a cost of £6,000.

In front of these warehouses are, we can see, two short jetties in process of construction, one practically finished. They are to cost £16,000, but they will very greatly facilitate the landing of cargo.

STEAMSHIP COMMUNICATION

In contrasting the present with the past, it is impossible to refrain from alluding to the extraordinary progress that has been made in steam communication between the mother country and Sierra Leone.

The first mail-steamer that I travelled by was the *Bonny*, in 1872; the time occupied on the passage was, so far as I can remember, eighteen days.

The *Bonny* was a small flush-deck boat of about 1,200 tons, with state-rooms on each side of the saloon that was situated "between decks." Down the centre of the saloon was a long narrow table with swinging trays overhead to hold the water-bottles and tumblers, the wine glasses fitting in circular grooves specially cut to receive them, long rubber tubing being attached to these trays and to the deck-ceiling to minimise the swinging, a precaution often required. The closeness of the state-rooms to the saloon table was not only a very great drawback to one's comfort, but was excessively disagreeable, when passengers, as was too frequently the case, were suffering from *mal de mer*.

In those days there were no refrigerating chambers and no ice for the passengers' use. A very small quantity, mainly for preserving for a few days the fresh meat and fish taken on at Liverpool, was kept in the ice-house.

When ports were called at, a bullock, a few sheep, some fowls, ducks, eggs, fresh vegetables and fruits might be purchased. There was something that certainly went by the name of a bath-room, placed next to the steward's pantry, which, when not in actual use, being so temptingly near, served as a handy receptacle for the usual heterogeneous collection of oddments generally to be found about a commissariat department. Tinned provisions had not arrived at the perfection of to-day, and were then mostly of the heavier kinds, such as beef and mutton, served in various forms of disguise, but always to me particularly objectionable. The meals generally were uninviting, and deserved the opprobrious remarks and continual expressions of discontent which were constantly heard amongst the passengers.

The saloon and state-rooms were lighted by candles; in the latter a single candle placed between two state-rooms, behind a curved ground glass, more correctly perhaps described as a large lantern, threw out a glimmer of light into both apartments just sufficient to see to disrobe by and tumble into one's

bunk. Frequently when I occupied the lower bunk, the head of which was by the side of the small fixed wash-hand stand, by obtaining from the steward a loose candle, melting the end, and poising it vertically on the top of the stand, I was enabled to read a little as I lay in my bunk, if the ship were tolerably steady, but not otherwise. The most objectionable lavatory arrangements were about on a par with the bath-room; the ringing of a hand-bell invited the passengers to meals, and one's own voice was the method adopted to summon the bedroom steward when his services were needed. But as only a few passengers were carried in those days, a dozen being quite a considerable number, the size of the steamers, together with the class of accommodation and living, was as much as could very well be expected, notwithstanding that the saloon rate was much in excess of what it now is.

The steamers have been improved year by year to meet the growing requirements as they occurred, until to-day the magnificent fleet of the Elder-Dempster Line, in its latest vessels, form such a complete contrast to those of the early days as to call for the greatest praise. The change, indeed, is quite remarkable, and with it of course follows greater comfort in every way.

The tonnage of the more recent steamers is about three or four times as large as those I have described. There is a much more frequent service and a greatly accelerated speed. There is also electric lighting throughout the entire ship, in itself an enormous advantage, and spacious refrigerating chambers carry sufficient provisions of a most varied kind, not only for the round voyage but also enough to supply the wants of Europeans on the Coast at reasonable prices, which is, I need hardly say, most highly appreciated.

The arrival and departure of the mail and passenger steamers at and from Sierra Leone take place with unerring punctuality, and should there be any delay, it may generally be attributed to stress of weather; it is altogether unusual for it to occur from any defect of the ship's engines or any other preventable cause. The changing of passenger accommodation from the afterpart of the vessel to amidships is greatly esteemed,

minimising as it does the effect of the various movements of the steamer, which in very rough seas is no inconsiderable advantage to the none too experienced landsman, and so reducing the unpleasant feeling of vibration caused by the revolving of the screw and its "racing" in a head wind, as to make it almost imperceptible.

But perhaps to the passenger one of the most welcome changes is in having a large and beautifully fitted saloon on the upper deck, quite distinct from the state-rooms; the introduction of an elegant music-room and comfortable smoking-rooms, a long promenade for walking exercise, perfect sanitary arrangements, and bath-rooms with long porcelain baths for hot and cold sea-water, or fresh-water if required. All of these up-to-date arrangements, added to which is a most excellent and well-served *cuisine*, form a change as complete as it is enjoyable to those who, like myself, can too well remember the disagreeables of the past.

With the general advance of trade, the opening up of the Hinterland, the creation of the Protectorate, the pacification of the country and Governmental supervision, the construction of a railway, and the extended medical knowledge acquired in the treatment of African fevers and the improved health conditions at Sierra Leone, the ocean traffic for mails, passengers, and cargo has so enormously increased that it is quite a usual thing nowadays to travel with 100 or more passengers. I have frequently been with from 90 to 110 in the express boats running direct from Liverpool to Sierra Leone and West Coast ports. Whereas formerly the time taken to Freetown was about eighteen days, it is now accomplished in ten days, and homeward to Plymouth (calling in at Las Palmas, Grand Canary) in the same time. Steamers of the new class, such as the *Mendi*, are of 5,000 tons.

With the introduction of an export trade in the heavier and practically indigenous kinds of fruits, such as bananas, plantains, mangoes, oranges, limes, and pine-apples, which can hardly much longer be neglected, specially-fitted fruit-carrying steamers will be needed, in fact are now needed. The trade in these fruits could and would soon become enormous,

for beyond the inexplicable absence of suitably constructed steamers for this delicate trade, which has been repeatedly brought forward by myself and others, there is absolutely nothing whatever to hinder the immediate starting of a great fruit industry, which should be alike profitable to the grower, the shipper, the steamship owners, and the consumers. It seems incredible that so remunerative an industry should not have been worked long ago.

CHAPTER III

FREETOWN—A GENERAL LOOK ROUND

THE wharf at which we land is at a low level, so, as the ground begins to rise at once, a sharp gradient has to be ascended to reach Water Street, the entrance to the town.

Originally this gradient was of rock that had been fairly levelled, but the surface has recently been greatly improved by the Government.

As, however, there are no mechanical means for dealing with goods, everything has to be hauled up this steep incline by manual labour, which, under a tropical sun, is a cruel task.

To my mind it seems that this hauling might be obviated by the putting down of an "endless platform," which would mechanically bring the goods to the level of Water Street, where their owners might deal with them comparatively easily. This would not only save much exhausting labour, but would prevent the damage the goods themselves sustain by the unavoidably rough usage of the present system.

Under the burning sun this unshaded ascent is a bad beginning for every one who does not use a hammock.

To the right of the gradient is the railway line for goods traffic which works between the wharf and the Central railway station, going through the open street by a very steep curve.

A short flight of steps brings the traveller to the main thoroughfare nearest to the wharf, Water Street, running parallel with the harbour, and in which many of the principal buildings are situated; there is, however, little about these buildings to attract immediate notice.

It is the human interest that from the first imperatively demands attention. The busy crowds of men, women, and

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children, with their life, movement, and colour, exercise a kind of fascination over the onlooker even when he is familiar with them. And these many-coloured crowds are all intent upon one thing, various as may be their attempts to reach the universal goal. That one thing, for six days in the week, is Trade; trade in the great stores and trade in the open streets, trade from the firms who do business in thousands of pounds, down to trade by the tiny child with a calabash on its head containing a few boxes of matches or reels of thread. The native Sierra Leonean is a born trader; but it is, of course, what they call "the itinerating trade" that first strikes the observer. Wherever there is a street corner with a tree and a little shade to sit under, there you may notice clusters of people and someone selling.

Perhaps it may be a well-dressed woman in a starched print gown, with her expensive Gambia wrap over her shoulder and a bright silk kerchief on her head. This lady has her stock set out before her piled upon large calabashes, it may be laces, embroideries, fancy stockings (a great article of commerce), and gay silk handkerchiefs. The trader at the next corner may have a heap of fine Aku or Gambia cloths; farther on may be a calabash of clay pipes next to one of small red-framed looking-glasses, supported by a pile of penny loaves, by the side of which a child may be offering locally made peppermint sticks.

If you pass a group of people you will generally hear them talking about money—"copper" is the term.

Once indeed, as I went by a bevy of women, I caught this pious rebuke: "Ah, sister, we can heap up riches, but we no sabby who go gader dem."

Wherever you turn there is a blaze of colour, yet all is harmoniously blended. Natives of the tropics have a natural desire for colour, and the traveller from the grey north after a time grows to desire it too. The street crowds provide him with a veritable feast of colour. It is found not only in the bright garments of the women but also in those of the men, especially in the men of the Susu tribe with their gay sleeveless gowns edged by innumerable buttons, while a group of



OUTSIDE THE PUBLIC VEGETABLE MARKET, WATER STREET, FREETOWN

"KING JEMMY," FREETOWN
The waterside market.

FORM

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Mandingoes with their white surplices will supply a brilliant high light.

The delightful hues of fresh fruit—the gold of the banana, the peach-like tones of the mango, the delicate shades of pink in the rose-apple when you see them carelessly heaped in calabashes, give you an idea both of beauty and profusion. Wherever you turn there is colour—and sunshine flooding it.

As soon as you are in Water Street, which is the real entrance to the town, you are at once in the midst of this busy life. The fruit and vegetable market is on one side, on the other stand some of the large European trading houses, the Cathedral of St. George rising above all; while a little way off is the modern railway station, and in the distance, closing the end of the broad street, is always the green background of the forest-clad mountains, cool against the hot town.

Near the Cathedral stands a large tree known as “The Umbrella Tree,” affording a pleasant shade from the glare of the red laterite, the native stone. When I first saw Water Street it was planted with young umbrella trees, so called from the heavy and wide-spreading foliage peculiar to them; but as these trees grew it was thought that they harboured mosquitoes, so they were destroyed with the exception of this and another close by it. The petty traders seek their shade, and here sometimes may be seen the ice-cream barrow under its white awning, with several children standing round it as in London, while some fortunate owner of a “copper” enjoys a ha’porth of delicious coolness out of a small tin bowl, which he conveys to his mouth by means of his fingers, a feat not quite as easy to perform as one might imagine.

Ice, by the way, in any shape, is an entirely new importation, but certainly one for which to feel grateful. To the old coaster it indeed marks an advance he is thankful to see. What difficulty there used to be, and that not so long ago, to get a bit of ice from a steamer! Only those who have had to go down on their knees for a morsel can really appreciate what cheap and readily-to-be-obtained ice means in this country, especially to the sick.

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As I have already said, the whole town is devoted to trade; it does not matter what street you take, you will be met there by the itinerating trader. The only difference is in the relative congestion of the place; some streets being so crowded that you might, as the saying is, walk along on the people's heads, while in others there is room enough and to spare.

In the town the principal thoroughfares are much alike. The ground is always red laterite; the majority of the good buildings are of the same porous stone, and most of their roofs are of corrugated iron.

The Government have opened a quarry for working the stone, connecting lines of rail enabling any quantity to be supplied to the public at a reasonable rate. This is a very great local improvement, in consequence of which buildings can now be put up with rapidity and with a certainty of supply.

The principal buildings, beside those already mentioned, are the large block in George Street, comprising the Colonial Secretariat, the Treasury, and the Local Auditor's offices; farther on in the same street is Government House.

Scattered over the town are many churches of the various denominations we know in England, as well as some that are distinctly American.

Few have any architectural pretensions, but most of them are well built and comfortable. Some of the older churches are extremely ponderous; so unnecessarily massive indeed that the only reason I can assign for this is the builder's hope that they would prove cool.

The Post-Office and Government Savings Bank, although of some considerable size, have become quite inadequate to the demands upon them. Increase, both of accommodation and staff, is urgently necessary.

With the railway has come very quickly the opening of innumerable new village post-offices throughout the Protectorate, and as yet headquarters have not been enlarged to an extent sufficient to enable them to cope with the entirely new up-country business.

The Colonial Hospital is a very large but old building. It

is a general hospital for every one, with a staff of British and native assistants under a British principal medical officer. I remember this institution from my earliest connection with the Colony, but of late years, with the increase of European residents and the opening up of the Hinterland and the great influx of country people into Freetown, the demands upon it have very greatly increased, necessitating the maintenance of a much larger staff.

I was at this hospital recently visiting a paramount chief from Sherbro, one of my oldest friends. He was suffering from a common native disease, elephantiasis, and his condition was described to me as "going from bad to worst." He was becoming useless to his people when he entered the hospital, apparently a doomed man. After an operation he rapidly recovered, and when I saw him a few months later he was altogether changed—bright and cheerful, quite a new man. Since my return to England I have received a letter from his son, who writes: "I am glad to tell you that the chief, my father, has returned to his chiefdom. He looks all like a young man with a robust appearance; his people, friends and family were exceedingly surprised to see him with gladness of heart. From all I could sketch from the spectacle of his appearance, I must say that the surgical operation of Doctor Renner had done the chief a thousand good in the restoration of his life and health." It is this sort of thing that is doing so much to open the eyes of the people, and to show them what science and not fetish can do.

This great hospital is a Colonial institution supported by the Government. It is situated on the western side of the town, near the waterside markets at King Jimmy—a very populous locality.

Near the hospital, in Oxford Street, is a corner building which in years gone by was used as the old mixed Commission Court, but which is now the Colonial Nursing Home for European paying patients.

This institution is under the principal medical officer, with a British matron and two sisters. It is naturally a most useful place, resorted to by those who can afford the luxury

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of extra care and attention, and it must be a great satisfaction to the near relatives of those who are temporarily resident in a climate not enjoying the best reputation, to know that there is such an institution at which European patients can be looked after and receive the best medical attention, and at the same time be nursed by trained white ladies.

Two miles away, at the eastern side of the town, is a Mission Hospital, small in comparison but doing an infinite amount of good, both spiritually and medically.

Between these two hospitals are many of the most congested streets, overcrowded with petty trading stores and little houses packed with native families. The Mission Hospital is in the Mohammedan quarter. I have been so deeply interested in its unostentatious work and touched by the personal kindness shown to the patients by its whole staff, that I cannot refrain from giving further on a little account, which I wrote at the time, of one of my recent visits to the Princess Christian Mission Hospital.

CHAPTER IV

FREETOWN AS SEEN IN ITS STREETS

IT must be confessed that, apart from its human interests and the natural beauty of its surroundings, Freetown as seen in its streets is disappointing. The whole town has, however, been carefully planned, and laid out in straight streets, intersected by very broad main thoroughfares. Everywhere the ground gently rises until the end of the vista is closed by the mountains, and this is always a delight to the eye.

There are scarcely any interesting architectural details ; few picturesque buildings. Age, which in Europe so often gives quaintness if not beauty to buildings, fails to do so here ; for the tendency in the older houses is for pillars, windows, and doors to get out of plumb, giving the whole place a disagreeable, lop-sided appearance. Many buildings indeed are so heavy they sink by their own weight. Then the roofs of older houses, instead of having those deep eaves generally met with in hot countries, have been cut off almost level with the walls ; consequently they cast no shade, and the houses look almost as blank as those of a child's Noah's Ark, for even the verandah, usual in most tropical countries, is wanting.

The reason for its absence is said to be fear of the burglar, who, it was thought, might find the verandah too tempting, and who during the rainy season was far too much in evidence. Without either deep eaves or a shady verandah, a house built for the tropics is apt to look featureless and indeed singularly out of place. There is, however, an improvement now taking place in respect to modern Europeanised houses.

The native red laterite is answerable for an unpleasant

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red dust, everywhere a nuisance. Vegetation growing in the streets, although it is perhaps a welcome relief from the glare of the sun, gives the roadside walks a weedy and uncared-for look.

There are, however, some very solid stone edifices of recent construction—well built too, for with the growth of the technical school a great improvement in both carpentry and masonry has taken place. Shops, stores, and private houses with small compounds are all mixed together, although, as we shall see later, a good many Europeans are now able to sleep out of town in their mountain bungalows.

Of late years the gardens of the houses in Freetown have very greatly improved. Certain flowers and shrubs formerly unknown now flourish luxuriantly. Gardening as an art is better understood; but in many of the gardens the most beautiful flowering plants will be seen entangled with masses of the exquisitely tinted leaves of the crotons that grow profusely everywhere, in a blaze of colour that never fails to be as harmonious as it is variegated. In these Freetown gardens may be seen the bright red of the single and double hibiscus, the delicate white spider lily with its long drooping petals, a small red iris in blossom by the hundred, all overtopped by the frangipane, which grows to a tree of considerable size and becomes when in flower a mass of great clustering white or orange blooms. In some of the cemeteries, where there are some hundreds of these trees in blossom, the effect is indescribably beautiful.

A poor house may have a gorgeous garden, delightful not only to its owner but to the passer-by, who knows how to admire the refreshing loveliness of the tropical flora so lavishly flourishing in this otherwise arid town.

We will now return to Water Street, and look at some of the principal buildings there.

The Cathedral is the first building in the town to attract attention. It is a good solid edifice, but is absolutely without any of those charms either of antiquity or architecture with which the word "cathedral" is associated in a European mind. It has, however, the advantage of being very well placed near

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the harbour, and its size and the solidity of its construction make its interior cool. It has a deep chancel, and many mural tablets to those who have passed away.

Plain as is St. George's Cathedral, it answers its purpose as the chief church of the diocese of Sierra Leone. The services are crowded; there is a large native choir, duly surpliced, and divine worship is conducted both with reverence and heartiness. Its presence, moreover, standing where it does immediately overlooking the harbour, at once arrests attention and stamps the whole Colony as a professedly Christian land.

Opposite the Cathedral is a very fine, and, one may even say, imposing Custom House.

The growth of the Colony's revenue is proving quite phenomenal with the opening up of the remote Hinterland, now brought into touch with Freetown both for exports and imports; a growth which must, *volens volens*, be materially increased as communication by the Government "feeder roads" is carried farther up country on both sides of the railway and modern science is brought to bear upon the treatment of raw produce.

By these "feeder roads" new and hitherto untouched fields of natural productions are rapidly being turned to account, and the statistics given further on will show the great increase in oil-palm products that has already taken place.

Have you ever been within an oil-palm belt? Not yet; well, when you have, you will agree with me that the number of oil-palms in the forests is inconceivable, and there is no doubt even now, as we shall see when we come later on to notice the change the new means of transport has already effected, that all that is needed is still further development in the direction of using this natural wealth by "power" machinery, to make Sierra Leone a much more important revenue-producing Colony than it has hitherto been.

There is no export duty on native produce; still it follows that the greater the exportation the greater must be the importation from Great Britain, the Continent, and the United States, to meet the fresh wants and the spending powers of the

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opened-up districts. This spending power, although the productive parts of the railway line have only been at work for about three years, is already greatly increased, and as it is daily growing, it promises soon to attain very large proportions. I happen to know many of these new districts myself, and am convinced, not only of the enormous capabilities of development as regards their natural productions, but of the eagerness of the people to turn these products into European goods, which they are now rapidly learning to appreciate.

The tonnage has very greatly increased, and steamers are now almost daily entering and departing from the port of Sierra Leone, and the Customs have developed into a gigantic department.

A few words here on the new sources of revenue may not be out of place.

THE REVENUE FROM THE PROTECTORATE

The railway into the interior would have been impracticable without the creation of a Protectorate.

This Protectorate was formed by a series of friendly treaties with the Hinterland chiefs, most of whom had been suffering severely from devastating tribal wars of the most terrible character, and who were therefore anxious to secure permanent peace by an alliance, that, under certain conditions, preserved to them their own territorial rights. On these friendly treaties naturally followed the dividing of the Protectorate into workable areas under British District Commissioners, of whom I had the honour to be one.

The settlement of the Protectorate, and the reconstruction of the Colony were carried out during the administration of the late Governor, Sir Frederick Cardew, with an ability that has hardly yet received its due meed of appreciation. At one time public opinion went much against Governor Cardew, but for myself—and I was in a position to form an unbiassed judgment, having served under him during his entire administration of over six years—I have never wavered in my admiration

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of his statesmanlike qualities and of the way in which he handled the Colony during perhaps the most difficult period of its history. It was a period of unrest, owing, it was alleged by many, to the introduction of the house tax, that ultimately culminated in the native rising of 1898.

During my recent tours it was a source of extreme gratification to me to hear many expressions of appreciation of Governor Cardew's policy, and this not only from leading Europeans but also from the most intelligent of the educated Creoles. "And the time will come," it was added, "when this view will be held by all who know what he has really effected."

Judged by its results Governor Cardew's policy has proved to be eminently successful. The house tax has been continued since his time, and is now collected by the chiefs themselves, without any trouble whatever, and is paid by them to the various District Commissioners, who periodically go about tax-gathering. The amount of house tax collected in the Protectorate for the undermentioned years is as follows :—

1905	.	.	.	£38,553
1906	.	.	.	£40,947
1907	.	.	.	£43,034

On the whole the people have by now grown to understand that they are getting back more than they pay. Naturally, however, there has been a try on or two; some not without a touch of humour. For instance, a number of little lean-to sheds, known as Konkos, would be run up as annexes to the house proper; these would shelter several families, who thought that as the sheds were attached to one house one tax would cover the lot. This little deception spread about the country, and had of course to be dealt with.

But as these people readily see things when they are properly explained to them, it was merely the work of a short time to pass a law, limiting, for fiscal purposes, one house to one family, and to get it understood and obeyed. The plain fact is that the people are finding out that British rule is

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profitable for them. Slavery, their curse in bygone days, is now a matter of history. The natives now have liberty to go where they like and to trade freely. Many a time lately they have expressed to me their thankfulness to the Government for what has been done for them and their country. They no longer fear native raids, the horrors of which are well within their memories; they feel a security formerly unknown; they can and do now devote themselves to the cultivation of their lands with a reasonable hope of being able to reap what they have been sowing, and whenever I went within touch of the railway I could but observe the contentment of the people and the growing prosperity of the country. While communication is afforded and this prosperity reigns the revenue cannot fail to rise, for the revenue is, after all, the gauge of the state of a country. Those who know the Colony are quite aware of this, therefore the authorities may look with assurance to a greatly increased revenue in the course of the next few years. Personally I can see nothing that ought to stop it, although in Sierra Leone, as elsewhere, there are grave social problems already in evidence which before long will have to be faced.

The revenue for 1907 was £359,104

„ „ 1897 £106,009

„ „ 1887 £60,637

These figures speak for themselves.

In front of the Custom House is the public vegetable market, a very large and busy building. On market days this place is surrounded by buyers and sellers, all of them using their voices to the utmost extent.

THE LAW COURTS

These courts, which are almost adjoining the market, occupy one of the very oldest and most inconvenient public buildings in the town. I have attended the Law Courts when the noise from the crowds outside has been so deafening as to distract the attention from the case that was going on, and the voice of the Chief Justice has been nearly drowned.

No doubt as the revenue increases and funds become available, consideration may be given to the transfer of these courts to a new and better building in a more desirable quarter.

THE WILBERFORCE HALL

This is situated next to the Cathedral, and was built in memory of William Wilberforce, the great advocate for the abolition of slavery. It is a plain solid edifice with a corrugated iron roof. It was many years in building, as funds came in slowly; indeed for a long time it was a mere "carcase" and a great eyesore to the whole town. During the centenary year (1887), however, a great effort was made to complete it, and it was duly opened at a great meeting (at which I was present), the principal feature of which was a lengthy oration by the late Sir Samuel Lewis, Knt., C.M.G., then the leading native barrister and member of council.

The upper part is a large hall, which may be hired for public and private meetings, concerts, balls, &c.; the lower part has been divided into offices for the Municipal Corporation of Freetown, to which is attached a public reading-room where many of the English papers may be found. This is another improvement which is of great use to the community.

As we turn from the Wilberforce Hall and look eastward we see the stores of some of the principal mercantile houses, in front of which the railway lines run, leading into the station itself.

The railway demands so much space, and has already made such important alterations in the whole Colony and Protectorate, that we can now only give it a passing glance. The station is a substantial building of native stone, and absolutely up-to-date. The telegraph throughout the railway system and the telephone to the Government offices are arranged as if in England. This amazes me; there was no cable or telegraph at all when I first saw Freetown.

The railway has a very large passenger traffic, and a still larger carrying business in goods and produce.

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This station is also the terminus of the short Mountain Railway that takes the European officials and others up to their bungalows on the high land above the town at Wilberforce. The single line of rail we saw on the wharf while waiting to land also runs in and out of this station through the open streets.

CHAPTER V

THE POPULATION OF FREETOWN

THE population of Freetown is perhaps as cosmopolitan as you could find anywhere, but it may be roughly divided into the four following classes, each however with numerous subdivisions:—

1. The Sierra Leoneans, properly so called, but locally known as Creoles. These form the bulk of the population.
2. The Natives of the various neighbouring tribes, who from different causes have settled in Freetown, or are living there for a time.
3. The white community, generally known as Europeans, but of course including Americans and West Indian officials.
4. The Imperial West Indian troops.

Let us consider the two first of these sections in detail.

The Sierra Leoneans are coloured people. They are descendants of the early settlers, many of whom were liberated slaves from America and from other parts of the world. For over a hundred years they have been British subjects. The present Creoles have been born in the Colony of English-speaking parents, have been educated in the schools of the various missions, and are professedly Christian. They are entirely distinct from the natives or aborigines, and have no tribal language; although some of them, having intermarried with people from other British West African settlements along the coast, may speak the language of the tribe into which they have married.

Until recently the Creoles have rarely married up-country people, or any they regard as heathen, against whom they entertain a considerable amount of prejudice.

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These Creoles are essentially traders. The children are born and bred in trade of some kind or other; it seems hereditary to them, and is as a rule the only sort of business or work to which they take naturally and kindly.

The consequence is that trading is very much overdone by them. They are all treading on each other's heels, and many of them are finding it very difficult to make a living.

Those whose experience entitles them to be heard on this subject have repeatedly told me of the great concern with which they regard this state of things. The problem before them, which they feel to be a very grave one, is: How to divert the energies of the younger generation from trade to such a mechanical or agricultural training as will fit them for the local industries and up-country developments. This is not easy, although there are instances in which it has been successfully accomplished.

And while the young Sierra Leonean finds a growing difficulty in making money by trade, his tastes, which have become more and more expensive, lead him to lavish what little he has, augmented by what credit he can obtain, on European dress and a general mode of living far in excess of his precarious income.

With all his inbred commercial instincts he fails to see distinctly that it is bad business to turn earnings that should go to increase his stock-in-trade into Postal Orders for a firm of London tailors, whose picture advertisement has struck his fancy.

Although the Sierra Leonean, as he was born in Sierra Leone, is literally a native of the Colony, with forefathers who were also born there, he is never called "a Native," and would strongly object to be classed as one.

Among the Sierra Leoneans there is however an upper class of well-to-do families who are able to expend money on giving their sons a professional education in England, mainly legal and medical, the ministry of the different churches being supplied by those who have received local education and training in the various missions.

THE NATIVES OR ABORIGINES

The traveller who thinks that all black people are alike must be very new to the West Coast of Africa; for as you walk about the streets of Freetown you cannot fail to observe, if indeed you are capable of observing, the great differences among the coloured people who jostle each other in the crowded thoroughfares. Features, physical development, distinctive dress, head and foot gear—or the want of it—and a peculiar gait, mark the members of widely different tribes, and give a strange but picturesque variety to the scene. Of tribes and sub-tribes there are indeed many, with the languages as numerous as their nationalities; and of course often unintelligible except to the tribe that speaks it. It is generally believed that over half a hundred separate languages or dialects may be heard in the streets of Freetown. Most of the coast people know, however, a little English.

Let us notice the principal tribes that are met everywhere.

THE MENDIS OR KOSSOS.—These are a fine race and may be considered aborigines, as they were the inhabitants of what is now the Colony and the Protectorate before the coming of the white man and the liberated slave. They are still one of the most important people of the Hinterland or Protectorate, and their country, locally known as Mendiland, extends over a very large area, a great deal of which is now within the influence of the railway.

When the Sierra Leone Government Railway was being constructed and navvies were required, the Mendi people contributed a very large contingent and did excellent work.

The making of the line naturally brought them to the Colony in such numbers that a Mendi chief has been appointed in Freetown to whom they can refer their tribal palavers. It has also become necessary to allot a quarter especially to them. This is called the Mendi Reservation; it has been laid out by the Government upon the Ginger Hall Estate, about a couple of miles away from the City near Cline town. The situation is excellent, the reservation being upon a gentle slope

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under Mount Oriel, overlooking the wide estuary of the Rokel, and having the advantage of the fresh breezes from the sea.

THE TIMINIS.—The Timinis are the aborigines of the land upon which Freetown now stands. Like the Mendis, they are a very large tribe. They too have their own chief at Freetown, who lives in the Mohammedan quarter between the Fura Bay and Kissy roads, where there is also a mosque and a Mohammedan cemetery.

The present chief is Alimami Momo, a young and good-looking man, whose photograph I was fortunate enough to obtain, as one day when I met him on horseback he very courteously reined up so that I was able to take the portrait I give here.

Alimami Momo is frequently seen riding about the town upon a very well-groomed pony, with a beautiful glossy coat, its neck adorned with a long tassel and a collar to which are attached about a dozen little hawk bells that give out a dull but melodious tinkle as he rides along and herald his approach. He wears a very becoming costume of bright colour with a heavy turban, and his manner is as affable and courteous as it is dignified.

I here remark, in passing, that many of the native chiefs set an example in the matter of politeness and ceremony, which in these days is a welcome contrast to the brusqueness too often noticeable among many persons of lighter colour. Their courtesy has often surprised me, and has done much towards forming the high opinion I entertain for them; consequently, I hope devoutly that as they come more into touch with our so-called civilised ways, they may not lower their existing standard of good manners.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOOD SUPPLY OF FREETOWN

THE population of Freetown has increased very greatly of late years; there are now many more Europeans than formerly, and great numbers of up-country people have yielded to the attractions of town life and settled in or near Freetown. The food supply has also greatly increased, but so large is the population that there is generally an extremely brisk competition at the markets.

Over the fruit, vegetable, and fish supply the coloured ladies reign supreme.

The Sierra Leone woman has developed an extraordinary faculty for trading, which she hands on to her children, who begin business life as soon as they can toddle about with a little calabash containing perhaps a single pine-apple or a few bananas on their woolly heads. We saw this lady trader, heard her too, at the waterside market at "King Jimmy," where she tackles the owners of the trading stuffs brought by the Susu canoes from the fertile Bullom shore.

Under the long roof of the general market in Water Street are large numbers of women stall-holders—it is in fact a woman's market; but at every turn in the town you see the woman trader, always in a stiffly starched print gown and a bright-coloured kerchief, tied round her head with that dainty perfection of touch that only a Sierra Leone woman attains.

In the market these women preside over the large but still insufficient stocks of fruits and fresh vegetables that are grown in the suburbs of Freetown and the villages near the railway. Salads, tomatoes, cucumbers, country spinach, and so on, look most inviting; cabbages too, for which some of the exiled

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Britons have a strong yearning, come in, looking the picture of freshness and cleanliness with the dew still on them, but sometimes on careful inspection prove to be disappointingly wanting in heart. The price of a cabbage is, however, high—from sixpence to a shilling. Everything is delightfully fresh, and indeed has no time to get stale, as sales are brisk for all garden produce, and vegetables are bought up almost as soon as they arrive. The wonder is, with such an increasing demand for all descriptions of garden stuff for the European appetite, more land is not brought into cultivation for these things. Market gardening is evidently an industry that calls for increased attention; but I am afraid that hitherto it has been a kind of hereditary employment, and that with the frequent incoming of steamers bringing all kinds of things in their refrigerating chambers in perfect condition, and the accelerated time in which the passage from England is performed nowadays, that before long we shall find that even the growing of the vegetables required for daily consumption and so much appreciated by the white community, and for which they are always ready to pay a handsome price, will, like so many other native industries, gradually dwindle away. It is a pity, because fresh vegetables here are both a luxury and a necessary of life.

The majority of Freetown people, I think, prefer actual buying and selling, and the bustle of town life, to the comparative dulness of working their little suburban patches of ground, notwithstanding the profitable returns that the land will yield them.

Potatoes and onions will not grow locally, but every steamer brings quantities of them. The only kind of onion cultivated, and that in a small way, is the "Yabba," which is similar to what we know in England as the "spring onion." I remember formerly it used to be considered the correct thing to cut off the bulbous end and offer only the green tops; however, that system did not meet with entire approval, and the purchase of the complete growth was substituted, which seemed a more satisfactory way of dealing with this too fragrant but eagerly sought after vegetable.

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Street selling, as I have already said, is all over the town; the calabash is everywhere in evidence. Women and children sit in groups under the trees at each street corner, or will secure a pitch by the roadside on which they will set out their goods. Day by day they begin quite early with the morning "pap," a kind of porridge, of which a satisfying helping can be had for the modest "one copper." This starts the native on his day's work, or he can supplement it by hailing one of the many vendors with calabashes containing, when in season, mangoes, bananas, or oranges, or by the purchase of a large pancake touched up by a suspicion of palm-oil, which is a common and favourite delicacy, obtainable at the same small sum. He can also buy such things as *agidi*, *kanya*, *abala*, *fura*, *konju*, *fufu*, and *akara-kuru*, all of which are procurable at the same figure. And here it may be as well to describe what these food-stuffs are.

Agidi is maize soaked and pounded and the starchy substance strained off. It is then boiled and wrapped in leaves. It can be eaten as it is sold, or, like rice, can be added to a stew, or with the addition of sugar taken as a sweet.

Kanya is made of pounded ground-nuts and rice-flour mixed with pepper and sugar, and sold in small pyramidal heaps.

Abala is rice-flour, palm-oil, pepper, and shalots all boiled together, and then wrapped in a leaf. It is of a yellowish colour.

Fura is similar to "pap," but of a consistency that permits of it being eaten without a spoon. It is usually made up into small balls about the size of a billiard ball.

Konju is a mixture of pounded ground-nuts, salt and pepper, baked crisp and moulded into the form of a wide bracelet of either two or four rings. It is by no means to be despised.

Fufu is a most important article of daily food, and used by all classes. It is cassada-root grated and made into a thick paste, sold in large balls, and eaten when cooked with palaver sauce, which is made from the leaves of a small shrub mixed with palm-oil.

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Akara-kuru is composed of banana and rice fried in palm-oil, made up into brown junks, and served with pepper and salt.

While upon the subject of food for the African negro—from the highest to the lowest—it should be remembered that as yet European diet is unsuited to them; they seem to need farinaceous food, such as rice, cassada, maize, mixed with its natural concomitant, palm-oil. Even Sierra Leoneans of the better class have stated to me that after dining with Europeans they have, upon reaching their own homes, been obliged to have some of their own dishes prepared to fill up the void.

In fact, the general native community is catered for by its own people in a really lavish manner for the popular “one copper.” The most universally patronised “chaw” is undoubtedly parched ground-nuts; the sellers, whose name is legion, of these insinuating but rather indigestible little kernels must do a very large daily trade in them. No native can be found who does not thoroughly enjoy them, and as quite a lot, deftly measured out in an end of a cocoa-nut shell, can be had for the orthodox coin, and as the nuts are very sustaining, it is not to be wondered that there should be so great a demand for them from all classes of the community. For my own part, I can only say that whenever my cook condescended to include a dish of parched ground-nuts in my evening menu, it was invariably the rule for my steward to close the room door and retire, leaving me and the ground-nuts and my faithful fox terrier to our own delectation; for dear old “Billy,” my true friend and companion in my travels through the country, was as greedy a devourer of them as I was myself, and it was not until the dish had been cleared that the door was opened and the servants re-appeared. I believe in England ground-nuts are called “monkey-nuts” and in America “pea-nuts.” How that has originated I am at a loss to know, for the true “monkey-nut” is the kidney-shaped grey bean that is attached to the outside lower end of the cuchu, a most luscious and delicious fruit, which is also to be had in Freetown, although it is not so very common. This bean may, with a considerable stretch of imagination, have some right



ALIMAMI MONO
The Chief of the Timinis at Freetown.



AN ITINERATING PALM-WINE SELLER
The jar on the woman's head is the familiar rum demijohn of trade

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to bear the name it has ; but ground-nuts, growing as they do in clusters upon runners underneath the ground, are purely and simply ground-nuts, and ought not to be associated either with monkeys or with peas.

Later on I shall have more to say on ground-nuts, but it is time we returned from the "one copper" breakfast items to observe the purveyors who are now preparing for the more serious work of the day, when the fish women come on the scene.

I saw quite recently several of these fish sellers at work. One lady was carrying on her head a calabash in which I counted eight large barrakuta, the heads and tails hanging over the sides, and the fish glistening in the brilliant sunshine like silvery salmon.

Barrakuta is a favourite fish, and its firm, whity-grey flesh makes excellent eating, though it is not over cheap.

The calabash of another woman may be loaded up with fine grey mullet ; unfortunately we never see the red variety.

Other sellers will have a stock of mackerel, large, but to my way of thinking, very delicious ; or of the "shine-nose," so called, I presume, because what they term the nose is curiously translucent ; or of the fleshy and inviting-looking red snapper.

If we cherish memories of the fried sole of Europe, we may be tempted to stop a vendor on her way to the house of some favoured European resident, and look into her calabash which is laden with large soles ; but, as we find later on, they are not up to our English at the best, which are certainly hard to beat either in flavour or in price. Those in the calabash may run from threepence to ninepence, and are very palatable.

Small minnows, locally termed "whitebait," we can have if we like, and fine crayfish, as excellent as we ought to desire.

Oysters will no doubt be brought to us in the season (which corresponds with our "r" in the month) in the shell from the dangerous Carpenter Rock. The price is by no means prohibitive ; we can pick out the small ones for eating uncooked, and shall find them uncommonly appetising, while the large ones we can leave for stewing.

Sometimes the fishermen make a good haul by landing a

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very large tarpon, which is a joy and delight to the people; but the dark coarse flesh is unsuited to European tastes, although it is eagerly bought up by the natives, and must be very solid eating.

The supply of fish is, however, inadequate to meet the daily demands, for the African always craves for fish of some kind or another, and gets it if possible. He is not over particular as long as it is fish, which with rice or cassada is his staple food; but so large is the demand for fish in Freetown, that there is little or none to spare for drying. Up in the rivers, especially in the Sherbro, the people make a speciality of fishing for the purpose of curing for the Freetown and up-country markets; yet even with this supply, although fish is fairly plentiful, it is quite insufficient for the needs of the people.

The commonest sorts of fish are "bunga," a very bony kind something like the herring, and cat-fish, well known to everybody; but neither of these is eaten by Europeans.

The villages of Freetown cultivating considerable quantities of ginger, ginger-beer is a very popular drink. It is made by the women, put into old-fashioned soda-water bottles, stoppered by a lump of paper or piece of palm-cane, and then placed in a calabash and hawked about the streets upon the head of the girl or woman who sells it at "three copper" a bottle.

I am not particularly impressed by it myself, as it is wanting in sharpness. It, however, appears to be greatly appreciated by the coloured people.

Palm-wine in demi-johns and beer-bottles is also hawked about; it is distinguishable by the white froth which is seen bubbling over the mouth of the bottle.

There is a considerable difference in the quality and taste of palm-wine, much depending upon the time of day it has been collected, and the way it has been watered; but, in fine condition, it is an extremely pleasant drink, and when poured out into a tumbler resembles the stone bottle ginger-beer of the old country, with its frothy head.

Those who can afford to have an iced drink, can get it at

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a store in the town. There are also a few native restaurants where the casual visitor from a steamer can obtain light refreshments, including malt liquors, lager beer being in great request.

For some time past there has been a European company established in Freetown for the manufacture of that very useful and here most necessary article, ice. There are many of us who very well remember how difficult it used to be to obtain, when we wanted it for some European friend down with fever, and how we had to send to some newly arrived steamer to beg a small piece. To new-comers this may seem curious, but the fact nevertheless remains that such was the case, and at no very remote date either.

This company not only manufactures and supplies ice, but makes aerated waters and sells them at reasonable prices. It also possesses cold storage premises, where imported meat, milk, butter, and other perishable articles of food can be kept. This is a very great boon, and enables those who can afford these luxuries to arrange an excellent menu.

English beef is sold at 10d. per lb., English mutton at 11d.; but unfortunately, so I have been lately informed, the supply is subject to certain vagaries that make it uncertain; and I understand that business friction is apt to prevent the harmonious and continuous working of the concern, and the regular importation of meat, &c. Indeed, supplies are sometimes altogether discontinued, to the great inconvenience of the white population.

The company's plant is capable of turning out six tons of ice in thirty-six hours. I have already mentioned the ice-cream barrow, that never-failing source of pleasure to the juvenile population. Considerable quantities of ice are sold to the ocean steamers; the daily output to the town is about three-quarters of a ton, and the price is 28 lbs. for 2s. A ton will be put free on board a steamer for £5. The mineral waters are supplied at 2s. a dozen.

Besides the cold storage, in which meat can be purchased fresh every day, a European butcher has recently set up business in the town, so that properly cut joints may now be

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obtained. They certainly look much more inviting than the joints of other days.

Sierra Leone is quite lavishly provisioned now as compared with the scant and costly supply of my earlier recollections. No one then could have imagined what the life of Freetown would become.

CHAPTER VII

THE POPULAR TRADING ROADS

THERE are certain great centres of native trade in Freetown, the names of which have become associated with distinctive kinds of business. Of these the best known is the typical Kissy Road. It runs towards Bishop's Court and Fura Bay College on the left, and to Kissy Town on the right. It is in the east end of the town, and in many respects is not unlike the market streets of our Whitechapel in London, and in the west end is the Kru-town Road, also very well known.

The whole of the long Kissy Road has a ramshackle appearance, although a large business is done there entirely for cash. It is by no means a narrow thoroughfare, but it is generally so crowded that you have to walk in the centre of the way. On each side is a line of stores with open fronts, enlarged by slanting platforms made up of sides of old cases, or not unfrequently of empty cases themselves, or crates that not many days before contained an assortment of cheap and wonderful crockery.

The Kissy Road is not a produce market, but almost every cheap manufactured article that the ingenuity of man has turned out is to be seen there; a most heterogeneous collection it is, and the traders are almost as cosmopolitan as their goods are various.

There we find crowded together British, Americans, Swiss, East Indians, Susus, Mandingoes, Timinis, and Mohammedans of many nationalities, with Sierra Leoneans and natives of all sorts; but I have noticed of late that the Syrians, unknown to me in earlier days, and comparatively recent competitors, now appear to be ousting a good many of the other people.

Susu tailors are much in evidence; their open shop fronts are hung over with their ready-made long braided gowns and their wide Sokoto trousers, of karki for preference, while they themselves at the back are driving their sewing-machines for all they are worth, and making up small jumpers or "*bubas*," as they are locally called, of coloured print or white shirting.

The Kissy Road is an emporium offering for sale everything the native can desire, and for tawdriness, crudeness in the blending of colours, and, especially in the cotton goods, grotesqueness of pattern, is probably unrivalled in any part of the world.

There is one pattern which seemed to me most gruesome and uninteresting for a lady's print dress. It rejoiced, I was told, in the name of the "foot-and-ear pattern," and simply represented a colossal foot and an equally colossal ear, printed alternately on the white ground of the fabric. To what country, I asked myself, could the genius who thought out that design belong? I never saw anything like it among the up-country native patterns.

I am afraid many of the imported articles are not calculated to improve the native taste. Even the tall Mohammedan Mandingo, still a picturesque figure in his long dark sleeveless gown over his spotless white under-robe, is spoiling himself, for too often his country-made sandals are now giving place to fancy wool-work slippers or tan leather boots, which rob him of much of his ancient dignity.

Fancy hats and caps of all kinds, felt hats, straw hats, and soft hats of every style and hue, and a tam-o'-shanter made on purpose for the African market, are much in demand, but the peaked cap is evidently first favourite. Woollen vests or singlets, chiefly in flaming colours in broad stripes of the zebra pattern most wonderful to behold, find a ready sale. Gaudy printed handkerchiefs and huge circlets of Jiggida beads appeal to the ladies, the beads especially, as they wear many rows of these beads around their waists from their earliest childhood. With the ladies also jappanned bonnet-boxes are

in great request, as being light and easily carried on the head. As for umbrellas, they are innumerable, for nowadays away in the bush you may meet the country people stepping out gaily under this protection from the glare of the sun as well as the downpour of the tropical rain.

The fancy smoking-cap is another favourite article, either elaborately embroidered in the gaudiest and commonest braid, or in tawdry gold thread with a golden escutcheon. Common Hamburg perfumery, in fantastically-shaped little bottles, is met with on all sides, while small red-framed mirrors, baby tin cash-boxes, bottles of ink, diminutive brass padlocks, tin bowls, fancy socks of extraordinary patterns and most variegated colours, thick woollen shawls known as "cold shawls," bunches of men's braces, bunches of every imaginable description of beads, large bolts of green and yellow woollen material, with an extensive display of the most heterogeneous collection of crockery that any curio hunter could desire to find, all go to make up the thousand and one articles that are imported to supply the wants of the people of the metropolis of Sierra Leone, and of those who are constantly coming and going through its trading roads.

But while one gazes upon all these imported goods, it is impossible not to notice that there is a general absence of country-made articles. Where are they? What has become of those beautiful hand-made country cloths, which used to be so much sought after both by Europeans and Sierra Leoneans, with their quaint and elegant patterns, their exquisite indelible colours from the vegetable dyes of the country, the superb and deep tones of the indigenous indigo plant, the subdued brown from the wild annatto tree, the brilliant yellow, and the intense black obtained from a particular woad far away in the Upper Mendi-land—where are these interesting handiworks of the real aborigines to-day?

The answer is not far to seek. With the march of so-called civilisation the paradox is presented of asking the natives on the one hand to grow cotton for the English markets, while on the other hand the English manufacturers are sending out, as an article of trade, manufactured yarns in all colours for the

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people to use in place of their own country-grown cotton, which they have cultivated and spun as far back as we can get at their history. It does certainly seem remarkable that we should want to do away with this native industry, centuries old, which has played such a prominent part in the past in everything that has appertained to native wealth and social position; for the country cloths were not only the robes of the chiefs and of the people, but were used as the principal currency of the country.

Where, too, are those fine and interesting examples of native pottery that at one time used to be so plentiful in the petty stores of Freetown? Are they in much request now? Oh dear, no! These really good hand-made and quaintly shaped earthenware bowls are now superseded by cheap tin basins and enamelled articles, all no doubt very well in their way, but all going to show how surely the transformation has set in.

A few of us, at any rate, regret the good old country-made cloths, and are thankful we managed to secure enough of them to make our English home a pleasure to the eye of every artist who sees them there.

Little East Street, that runs into the Kissy Road by the side of Susan's Bay, is very narrow and even more congested. It has much the same kind of trade.

THE KRU-TOWN ROAD

This is the popular trading road of the west end, and is approached by the fine broad Westmorland Street. Its trading is of much the same class as that of the Kissy Road, but, as its name implies, it and its off streets are allotted to the Kru people, who come from the Kru country further down the coast, and whose occupation is mainly in connection with the shipping. On busy days it is densely packed with people, and on Saturdays almost impassable.

One of the city markets is on this road, with the stalls kept by the Sierra Leone women; but there is a little annexe in which some Kru women may be seen selling small heaps of the



A DYING NATIVE INDUSTRY

Weaving a fine cloth from country grown cotton that has been treated with native vegetable dyes, within a barri or palava house, at the town of Gigbehma, in the Tunkia Country, about fifty miles inland from the sea coast at Sulima.

fresh fruit of the oil-palm, which the Kru people prefer to buy in this way rather than to purchase palm-oil already expressed. By way of this thoroughfare one gets to Ascension Town, Soldier Town, the new Recreation Ground, the Golf Links, Congo Town, Murray Town, and up to the cantonments of the West African Regiment at Wilberforce and on to the bungalows at Hill Station.

KOSSO TOWN

occupies the delta between the Kissy and Fura Bay Roads. It is laid out in a manner something resembling a chessboard, and filled with houses of all shapes and sizes. Some are good, but others are the veriest *simbeks* or shanties, and in a dilapidated condition. Now and again an outbreak of fire helps to get rid of some of those tumble-down tenements, and it is only surprising that conflagrations do not more often occur in this densely crowded quarter, which is inhabited principally by Mohammedans of various tribes, although Creoles, Mendis, Sherbros, Susus, and others are all huddled up together there.

THE REGENT ROAD

Running out towards the mountains and the suburban villages, this thoroughfare is especially attractive to the people living a short distance out of town. On Saturday they simply swarm in from the outskirts and crowd the whole place. Where these thousands of people, who are rarely seen at other times, all come from is surprising, and so also is the extreme pettiness of their trade. On Saturday they roam not only along the Regent Road but through the length and breadth of the town, which then presents a scene of the greatest animation, heightened by the brilliant-hued fabrics they all—men, women and children—wear.

After we have had enough of these trading places we will refresh ourselves by a short excursion in search of a charming little spot a short distance out of the town—George's Brook. To reach this retreat we must go along the broad Pademba Road, where we soon come to the site of the old Government Botanic

Station, now occupied by the new offices of the Public Works Department. It is rather a long way out of Freetown proper, but Mr. Copland, the Director, must find it an agreeable change from the over-crowded town with its stifling atmosphere, to this comparatively salubrious place, where among quiet and picturesque surroundings a good night's rest may be enjoyed.

In the grounds of the Director's charming bungalow is the Government Quarry I have already mentioned, and the short line of rail that connects this quarry with the whole railway system.

The road now becomes narrower and quite countrified, and we soon enter a fine open glade cut through trees and thick shrubberies. But before we are quite shut in by the natural walls we pass a very handsome villa, called Belle Vue, where we see a pair of very beautiful fan-palms. The borassus or fan-palm is so rare in Freetown that we cannot help pausing to admire its extreme elegance and dignity.

We are now rapidly approaching the high range of mountains in front of us, and presently find that we have come close to their base, and looking up, see a high and densely wooded mountain-side and an escarpment that appears almost vertical.

We will not attempt the ascent of these heights, so turn, and retracing our steps a very short way, we notice on our left an enticing little bridle-path through a brake of most delicate and insinuating clusters of bamboo canes, their tall and reed-like stems interlacing in the most bewitching manner, as though inviting us to proceed. We yield to the invitation, and soon come upon a delightfully secluded retreat known as George's Brook, where, in the dry season, there is a silent pool under overlapping mango trees. In this pool there is sufficient water for bathing and to get an apology for a swim. The water is of crystal clearness, rippling gently down from the mountains by a series of short cascades over the stony boulders, until it reaches the silent pool by which we are standing. And then it flows away over more boulders through a long vista, cut as it were by Nature for the special delectation of this one water-course.

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George's Brook is certainly one of the most peaceful little bits of rural beauty. It is delightful to find it so near to the congested city, and within our reach by a short and level walk ; especially pleasant in the afternoon, when the cares of the day are over and the sun is within an hour or so of giving us a respite from his burning rays.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FREETOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

IN the early issues of *The Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser*, published about the year 1820 (which, by the way, is very interesting reading), reference is frequently made to the mayor and aldermen of Freetown. But I have not been able to discover when a mayor was first elected, nor when and why this corporation ceased to exist. It must, however, have been a great many years ago.

The present municipal council was created in 1898, and the first mayor, the late Sir Samuel Lewis, Kt., C.M.G., a highly intelligent negro barrister, the leader of the native bar, was elected in 1895.

The mayor is assisted by a council of fifteen, twelve of whom are elected by the citizens and three appointed by the governor in council.

When the mayor retires at the end of his yearly term of office, he presents to the city council an exhaustive minute, in which he reviews the proceedings of his mayoralty. This review is printed as a pamphlet, and forms a concise and lucid account of the work that has been done during his term, referring to items of interest to the community in general and to the rate and tax payers in particular.

It also includes a statement of revenue and expenditure, tabulated under the proper headings.

From the minute presented to the city council by his worship, John Henry Thomas, the mayor, on the 9th of November 1907, on the termination of his third year of office, we learn that the estimated revenue from the 1st of November 1906 to the 31st October 1907 was £9,256, 16s. 11d., which was derived from municipal licences, market dues, water

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rates, house tax, grant in aid from the Government of £1,800, &c., &c. The expenditure over the same period amounted to £9,082, 0s. 11d.

The city still clings to the old style of street lighting, kerosene oil-lamps, of which 302 are used in endeavouring to illuminate this large and thickly populated city, and costing £1,350, 14s. 9d.

Upon the sanitary department is expended the sum of £2,339, 7s. 10d.; the fire-brigade consumes £119, 17s. 2d.; the interest upon loans figures up to £1,087, 3s. 8d.; and the outlay upon the water works comes to £1,039, 11s. 3d.

There are 143 stand-pipes in use throughout the city for the supply of water, undoubtedly one of the very greatest boons to every class of inhabitant that has ever been given to the public. Yet, notwithstanding the enormous benefit conferred upon the community by the water supply, there are some who appear to be unable to appreciate it, for in the minute from which these statistics have been taken, speaking of the water works, the mayor makes the following remarks:—

“We should congratulate ourselves for having a water works in the city placed under our control and managed by ourselves. The providing of an adequate supply of pure drinking water for the city has met a long-felt want, and the citizens of Freetown have been enjoying the many advantages which are derived from pure water, with the satisfaction that the whole expense of the construction and up-keep of the works have been borne by themselves.

“During the year a large and influential deputation waited on me on the subject of the water supply; not to complain that the supply was inadequate or the benefits derived were of a doubtful character, but to express their decided conviction that the expenses which have been incurred in procuring these comforts could be borne by the Colonial Government, and failing this they requested a reduction of the water rates. The deputationists were altogether unaware that it was the city council that had asked the Colonial Government to raise a loan for the construction of these water works, for the repayment of which loan the city council would of course

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be responsible—hence the obligation of the water rates. This is an instance, one out of many, of that deplorable and culpable indifference which characterises the general attitude of the citizens of Freetown in regard to the work of the corporation. They cry aloud and complain only when they are aroused from their dream of security, and realise the responsibility they have come under by the action of their representatives, and which they have no power to shake off: although opportunities were offered them to know what was in progress, they neglected to improve those opportunities; then they go again to sleep and assume the same customary indifference.

“How can they afford to be ignorant when the means of gaining necessary knowledge about the doings of the council are open to them? Whether the water works were erected by the Colonial Government or by the corporation, the cost would in any event, out of pure fairness, have to be defrayed by the city of Freetown, which alone monopolises the advantages. It must not be supposed that the city council is not aware that the additional $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as general water rates is an extra burden on the citizens of Freetown. No one would like to see his fellow-citizens ground down by excessive or unnecessary taxation; but when we have the loan to redeem and the interest to pay, the works to maintain and keep in proper working order, all these mean increased expenditure, and increased expenditure demands an increase of revenue—the water rates therefore must be imposed. At present there are 148 stand-pipes in use in the city.”

The corporation is young as yet, but it shows signs of vigorous growth; and considering that at the election of the original councillors, as Sir Samuel Lewis stated in his first minute, “none had any experience of municipal government,” it must be admitted that they have very successfully laid the foundations of their government upon what should prove to be a firm and permanent basis.

The difficulties that confront them are only the same as those that are met by other corporations in much older cities, whose council has been at work for centuries. It is

never an easy task to make the ratepayer feel that the payment of rates is a pleasant duty, although he is generally ready to take all the advantages the local expenditure brings him. It is even difficult to induce the average citizen to take a real and intelligent interest in the work of the municipality, until he becomes inspired by the ambition of one day being on the governing body himself. This is the same in most places.

As regards Freetown, however, it seems to me that the citizen is bound to consider that everything that tends to improve the health of a place which has suffered so much from its bad reputation, tends to its prosperity, and is therefore very well worth paying for, as the rate that has always cost him the most, from every point of view, is the death rate.

Let him steadily set before him the reduction of this rate, instead of grumbling about the trifle he has to pay for water and such sanitation as there is in the town.

There was a time when London undervalued her water supply, so she had to be taught its worth by the Great Plague, which swept away her people by the thousand. Freetown should remember this, and stint nothing that will make her less unhealthy than she is now—largely owing, no doubt, to that indifference of which Mr. Thomas so justly complains.

It is, however, encouraging to note the firm hand with which the mayor dealt with this matter, which gives us hope that in process of time, when the rising generation—many of whom are destined to become members of the corporation—has been taught the connection between cause and effect, has been better educated and their minds directed to something higher as a means of livelihood than the present hereditary petty and most precarious system of trading, there will be in Freetown a more generally enlightened community. The great public work of the corporation will then be less hampered by public ignorance and apathy, and the people will gradually realise the benefits that such a representative assembly should bring to the citizens, socially, commercially, and intel-

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lectually—not the least of these being the training of the young citizens in public work. Mr. Thomas, a Sierra Leonean, is an example of what a citizen should be.

The mayor and the councillors do not at present wear civic robes, nor have they any building of their own, but have to be content with the corporation offices in Wilberforce Hall.

If Freetown continues to be unhealthy, neither the water nor its supply can possibly be blamed. The water of Freetown is celebrated far and wide for its purity. It comes down from the mountains to the town at a point near the market known as “King Jimmy.”

There has always been a saying: “Once you drink of King Jimmy water, however far you wander from it you must always return to it.” And in many cases that would seem to hold good.

When I first knew Freetown, the difficulty in obtaining a sufficiency of water was one of the greatest inconveniences of the place, and it was customary for those who were in a position to do so, to employ a water-man, whose duty it was to roll a large cask from his master's house to “King Jimmy,” fill it with water, and roll it back again.

As my house was some distance from the place this was a work of time and had to be done daily, as the water was not only required for domestic purposes but for the morning tub.

What the Government has recently done in bringing a fine supply from the hill streams known as the Congo, the George, and the Ederoko by iron pipes into the town is a boon which is of incalculable value to the community. The water is conveyed to a service reservoir, built on the north side of Tower Hill—the site of the original barracks, under a mile from the town. From this reservoir the whole town is supplied with fine drinking water. Many of the houses have the water laid on; but the bulk of people obtain it from the numerous stand-pipes found all over the town. The outlay for this great public work was £27,948, 2s. 11d., and was taken over by the city council in August 1906. The amount is

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debited to the corporation at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The interest on loan, and the sum set aside as a sinking fund, is to be paid annually to the Colonial Government, namely :—

Interest on loan	£978	3	8
Sinking fund, 1 per cent.	£279	9	8
	<hr/>		
	£1,257	13	4
	<hr/>		

Although Sierra Leone is the oldest of our West African possessions, it is a long way behind the sister colony of Lagos, now incorporated with Southern Nigeria, both as to lighting and locomotion. In Lagos electric lighting has been in use for some years, and a tram has been working through the town; while Freetown has still to put up with kerosene lamps, just the same as those it had when I first landed there thirty-eight years ago, the only difference being that since the advent of the municipal corporation there are more lamps than formerly. The light tram does not exist, urgently as it is needed. For the majority of the people there is nothing but the primitive “marrow-bone stage” drawn by “shanks’ mare.” Under the broiling sun, or exposed to the torrential downpour, thousands must trudge daily many miles, numbers of them bare-footed, perhaps from the east at Fura Bay to the west at Ascension Town. It is true that the railway can carry passengers from Cline Town Station to Water Street, with a stop at the small wayside place, Dove Cot, near to East Street; but this does not answer the purpose, for what is needed is power conveyances to traverse the principal streets from end to end of the city, picking up and putting down passengers as may be required.

Some kind of cheap conveyance, with electric power for preference, is necessary. Covered cars suitable for the tropics, that would connect the different parts of this wide-spread city, would be a boon in many ways to the toilers, and one of its benefits would be the inducement to build in the suburbs and so relieve the congested streets of the centre. There seems ample room indeed for such an enterprise; the wonder is that it has not already been started, for there are so many thousands

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of people crowding the streets and now obliged to walk such long distances, often heavily laden, that one can but imagine that a tram with cheap fares, beginning with the "one copper" ride, would soon pay for itself.

It is quite evident that something of the kind will have to be provided before long, to meet the wants of the general public.

Europeans and the more opulent of the coloured community make use of hammocks carried by four men; but this is naturally expensive. Horses cannot be used for carriage purposes, as the climate does not suit them, and even riding horses are not expected to live for more than a couple of years or so. In earlier times they were given eighteen months, but they appear to last a little longer now for some reason, notwithstanding that the few there are allowed to roam, grazing by the roadsides, at their own sweet will and pleasure; however, all the horses in Freetown could probably be counted up on the fingers of one hand.

Sedan chairs were formerly a good deal used by the wealthier Sierra Leoneans before hammocks became so common, but they are not so much used now, excepting perhaps by coloured ladies.

The jinrickshaw is a comparatively new importation, and still rare. It is principally used by the missionaries from the United States of America and by European sisters from the Nursing Homes, who look extremely nice, happy, and contented as they are drawn along by their becomingly uniformed "boys." A picture is given of an American missionary and his wife in a jinrickshaw.

Government House, about five minutes' walk from the wharf, was originally the old Fort Thornton, named after the governor of the date of its erection; but so many additions have been made at different times, that now, with the exception of the lower part and the terraces, little of the fort remains.

It stands upon an elevation of 150 feet or so above sea-level, at the foot of Tower Hill, where, however, I never found any tower.



THE JINRICKSHAW

This is a comparatively new importation and still rare ; principally used by American missionaries and sisters from the Nursing Homes. They are drawn by uniformed "boys."

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FREETOWN

Originally the old Fort Thorton, but with alterations and additions little of the Fort remains.

11/10/11

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The whole city, sloping as it does up from the sea front to the base of the mountain range that forms its background, is naturally on an incline; and George Street with its continuation, in which the principal Government offices are situated, is no exception from the general rule.

Government House itself is approached by a very fine avenue of mango trees, whose shade is the resort of numerous petty vendors of palm-wine, ginger-beer, fruit, and other delicacies especially enticing to the thirsty passer-by. What little view of Government House, shut in as it is, can be obtained from this avenue, is disappointing at best; the only wonder is, that some more commanding residence has not been found for the representative of the British Government.

At the end of the avenue a pair of wide iron gates lead to a broad walk, one side of which is bordered by hundreds of small red lilies which in blossom are a blaze of colour, in vivid contrast with the white spider and the white giant varieties. The opposite side is laid out chiefly in crotons with a shrubby edging of bougainvillea. Various trees are standing about, frangipane, palms, and more beautiful than all, and noticeable not only for their beauty but because they are so rarely seen in Freetown, two specimens of that choicest of tropical trees, the travelling palm.

The limited space in front of the house is laid out to the best advantage; but it is a miserably pinched bit of ground for the principal residence in the city; a little fountain in the centre, however, tries its hardest to set off the place and to give the visitor courage to approach the embrasure of the old fort that does duty as entrance to the Governor's house.

In front of this embrasure, which is made in the thick and solid masonry, is a stone platform approached by a couple of low steps. When you get through the embrasure you enter a kind of underground dungeon, cold, dark, and dreary enough to satisfy the most determined recluse, a vault dismal to the last degree. No doubt, when the place was used as a fort, this entry served its turn well enough; but it seems singularly out of place in these peaceful days, and hardly suggests the welcome that is awaiting one.

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Turning to the right of this crypt-like passage, one almost expects to see on the walls all kinds of mystical hieroglyphs; but no, with the exception of a small carronade of a metal that on inspection turns out to be brass, on which is engraved "G.R. 1811"—there is nothing that would encourage any one fresh from Egypt to continue his explorations here. Two short flights of wooden stairs take one up into daylight, and, as the visitor's business may require, either to the official offices and the council chamber, or by a *détour* to the right, when on the first landing, to His Excellency's private apartments. These apartments, although comfortable and perhaps sufficiently commodious for a governor and his wife, are distinctly not laid out for large public functions, such as the holding of the levee upon His Majesty's birthday, on which important occasion the dining-room has to be transformed into a reception room of, it must be confessed, quite inadequate dimensions.

Considering that Sierra Leone has now been raised to the rank of a second-class colony, we may perhaps be tempted to ask whether it would not be wise to maintain imperial functions there with a greater outward dignity. The negro community are particularly sensitive in such matters, and take seriously to heart any relaxation of the etiquette which they consider due to themselves, or of the ceremony which it seems to them an important occasion demands.

The building has no more pretension to architecture than has one of the little house blocks in a child's Noah's Ark. It is, in fact, extremely ugly. Fortunately Mother Nature, who is everywhere trying to relieve the hideousness of man's work by some beautiful growth of her own, has in this instance covered one side of the high terrace of Government House with the most lovely profusion of the purple bougainvillea. It is wonderful what her little touches will do in softening the crudeness of the works of man; and certainly her lavish treatment here is truly welcome, for this Colony's old official buildings are, as regards their architecture, lamentable indeed.

The Bank of British West Africa was established only as recently as 1898. Up to that time there were no banking facilities at all, in the general acceptance of the term. It is

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true that certain houses might discount a thirty or sixty days' bill of exchange on Europe, charging five per cent. for the cash, with a bill of lading for produce shipped of much greater value, as collateral security.

The facilities, indeed, for obtaining cash were exceedingly restricted, and as every payment had to be made in actual coin, the duties of a cashier were both onerous and risky. Even at the Colonial Treasury all transactions, whether for receiving or for paying, were made in hard coin, so that if a person had to receive or pay say six hundred pounds, it might be that he would have to do so in silver coin of assorted values, such as half-crowns, florins, shillings, sixpences, threepences, and French five-franc pieces, all classified according to their respective values, and packed in bags of fifty or one hundred pounds.

To take this six hundred pounds from an office to the Treasury would require two men, each carrying three bags in the orthodox fashion, that is—one bag lying across each shoulder and the third poised on the top of the skull. Nor would the labour be minimised by using a hand-truck, as it would take the same number of men, one between the shafts while the other pushed up behind.

Only those who have had the handling of large amounts of coin can properly appreciate what it is to be relieved of all this monotonous counting, and of the feeling of insecurity of having to keep a large sum of money in a private house, instead of paying it into a banking account and so being freed from all further responsibility.

This bank has also afforded great relief to the Treasury of Freetown, to the Customs, to the numerous officials both in town and in the Protectorate, to all trading firms, and in the general carrying out of official and mercantile business.

If a large importing firm has now to pay say £1,000 in duty upon kerosene oil, hogsheads of tobacco, spirits, &c., instead of troubling the Customs to count that £1,000 over the counter in coin, the importer simply pays it into the bank to the Government account, and proceeds with the bank receipt, as evidence of payment, to the cashier of the Customs.

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This of course is an enormous saving of time and trouble, not only to the importer but to the cashier, as it enables him speedily to give his attention to the smaller importers, whose native clerks form a continuous queue alongside his counter, awaiting their turn to pay their duties.

The bank is also a great medium between importers and European exporters for the carrying out of their monetary arrangements.

The bank, which was very badly needed, is proving to be of invaluable service, the marvel is that it should be so recent an institution. How so large an amount of business as the Colony has long had to deal with could have been carried on so well under the prehistoric conditions that prevailed until a very short time ago, is indeed astounding to any one who has had personal experience of its difficulties. We may, however, be quite sure that a modern Government railway and an up-to-date and trustworthy bank are but the precursors of many other of those arrangements by which the civilised world simplifies commerce and saves labour—arrangements, the introduction of which would be very greatly to the benefit of the country and its peoples.

CHAPTER IX

THE REVOLUTION IN TRADE

THE whole system of trade, as I first saw it in Sierra Leone, has undergone a gradual but complete transformation, in fact an entire revolution.

Formerly the large European firms were merchants pure and simple, in the old-fashioned sense of the term. That is to say, their business then was strictly wholesale; they imported their goods; they bought native produce and shipped it, but they never broke bulk. They sold their imported goods in the original packages; they dealt only in large quantities, and left the retail business entirely in the hands of the Sierra Leone traders.

For instance, they imported manufactured tobacco in hogsheads and half-hogsheads. It arrived direct from the United States in American sailing vessels, the captains of these vessels delivering their cargoes to one consignee only, and receiving from him a return cargo, generally of bullock hides, for the American market.

In those days the retail tobacco trade was entirely in the hands of a set of Sierra Leoneans known as the "tobacco dealers," who traded in nothing else, and made a very good thing of it.

When a ship arrived from America the boxes containing the four-pound samples of each hogshead were first landed and taken up to the merchants' showrooms, where they were opened and the contents laid out for the inspection of the dealers, who were all called together upon a certain day, so that they might be sure that no preference was shown. They found the price marked upon the original label attached to each sample, went

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the round and made their selection, and when the hogsheads were landed they paid for them.

Sometimes one dealer would pay as much as £300 or £400. It then rested with the purchaser either to pay the duty and clear the tobacco at once from the Customs, or to leave it for a time in the bonding warehouse.

Now many of these dealers made a considerable profit when they came to retail the contents of their hogsheads, as tobacco has always been in constant demand; so the tobacco dealers and the spirit dealers, known as "grog sellers," were then regarded as amongst the most opulent of the Sierra Leone traders, their business requiring the outlay of a large amount of ready money.

All this is now changed. The middleman's occupation is no longer what it used to be, as the great firms of importers have gradually become their own middlemen, and, while continuing to be wholesale merchants, they have developed retail business on their own account.

In some cases this retail trade is carried to such an extent that firms who formerly dealt in hogsheads of tobacco and nothing less, will now sell, over the counter, a pound of tobacco to any one at the ordinary retail price.

This is, no doubt, due not so much to local causes as to the changes in modern commerce and to the enormous pressure of competition in the European markets, which has practically put an end to the time-honoured distinction of wholesale and retail, and has compelled all the European firms of Sierra Leone to become absolutely retailers.

The middleman of Freetown has been hard hit several times by circumstances quite outside his own control. The first blow to his prosperity was dealt when, with the delimitation of the Anglo-French boundaries, the caravans from the far interior, with their rich trade in ivory tusks, raw gold, bullocks and sheep, were diverted from Freetown and found their way up the coast to Konakri and other French ports.

Now formerly there were very good pickings for the middleman, generally a Mandingo and a Mohammedan, when a caravan with the country people came down to Freetown to

dispose of their things and to purchase goods to carry back. These interior people could speak no English; the middleman was able to act as interpreter and to take them round the great stores of the merchants to sell their produce and to show them how to lay out what they had got for it, to the greatest advantage. Naturally this was a lucrative business; but it has now come to an end.

Then the cable was extended to Freetown, setting in motion a system of direct trading with Europe for the wealthier people. Finally there came the parcel post, which practically makes the small purchaser quite independent of either the wholesale or retail local trader.

It was formerly difficult for small remittances to Europe to be made, but nowadays postal orders for the same amounts as in England can be obtained not only at the Freetown Post-Office, but at the numerous sub-offices that are being opened in the Protectorate.

This, of course, brings the individual native into touch with the great world; and the great world does not forget to post him plenty of picture advertisements, suggesting to him many desirable purchases he would not otherwise have thought of.

He now opens the illustrated catalogue; his fancy is taken with the hat, coat, or boots (especially the boots, for which he has an insatiable craving); he scrapes up the money, and whether he can afford it or not, sends off the postal order. In due time the goods come out by parcel post; he pays the duty on delivery at the post-office, and—there he is—"Palaver done finish!" Very satisfactory to him, no doubt, as he gets the things cheap, and—what is perhaps of even more consequence to him—well up-to-date; and when you consider that the parcel post will bring him out eleven pounds weight for three shillings, and that he has been saved the middleman's profit, and all bother, you can easily realise that the middleman's position is not what it used to be.

The Sierra Leonean trader feels all this pretty badly, especially as every Sierra Leonean wants to trade, and until

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quite recent times there were still some gleanings left from the great importers' retail harvest.

But this does not end his difficulties, for within a very few years a new and very formidable rival has quietly risen above the commercial horizon of Sierra Leone, and this rival is no other than the Syrian trader, of whom I shall have more to say later.

Many of the European firms are doing business on a very extensive scale, although, as I have already said, this business is now conducted on lines entirely different from those of the former wholesale merchants. Their stores are to be found in the principal thoroughfares, by the side of highways of great breadth, showing for the most part a long and very fine vista backed by the wooded mountain range.

Water Street, parallel with the harbour, is naturally one of the best positions in the city. Here are situated the stores of the French Company, of the Sierra Leone Coaling Company, and, conveniently near, the Bank of British West Africa, opposite the western end of the cathedral.

In a turning off Water Street, and occupying the whole of one side right up to Oxford Street, is the large emporium of Messrs. Pickering & Berthoud. This is a very up-to-date establishment, a sort of miniature Whiteley's, with plate-glass front windows in which are displayed the latest things in superior importations. One window will show boots and shoes, others lamps, china, glass, ladies' hats, dress material, men's helmets, caps, straw hats, &c. In this and in other large stores of the same type, anything and everything may be purchased.

Furniture and bedsteads may be bought in these houses nearly as cheaply as at home; in fact, there is nowadays no necessity for Europeans to take the trouble to bring a lot of things out from England if they are going to remain for any length of time in Freetown. The only benefit they derive from getting their goods in London is that they have a larger choice, and that if they are going away up-country, they can have their stores packed for overland transport in loads of the proper weight for their carriers.



A MUD STORE OF SYRIAN TRADERS

The Syrian is a serious rival to the native traders. He seems to be able to make a competency wherewith to return to his own country, whilst others are able to pick up a mere subsistence.

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Against these advantages they must, however, set the fact that in London they will be compelled at the stores to pay cash, while at the Freetown establishments, if their reputation is good, they may be allowed a little credit.

As a rule, those who go out to the West Coast are not over-burdened with that very necessary article—ready money; indeed, most old coasters have heard the familiar saying that has now become almost a proverb: “Going out one is all clothes and no money, while coming back one is all money and no clothes.”

In Wilberforce Street is the large establishment of Messrs. Paterson, Zochonis & Co., Limited. That also has plate-glass windows (a luxury formerly unknown), and an equally up-to-date stock of heterogeneous articles.

There are also the firms of Messrs. Ollivant & Co., Messrs. P. Radcliffe & Co., and others. Most of these houses have places on that part of Susan’s Bay known as the Saw Pit, where they receive and purchase produce. They have also branch houses or contractors on the Sherbro and other rivers and at different places in the Protectorate upon the line of railway.

As I have already said more than once, in considering Freetown we must never lose sight of the fact that the whole place is given up to trading. The people are born to trade, reared in trade, live by trade, and die in trade, and it would seem as if from the youngest to the eldest the great ambition of every member of the coloured community was to be a trader.

When, as often happens, there are six, eight, or even ten steamers in port—when tugs, lighters, row-boats, sailing-boats, and canoes are going to and fro—when the wharf is crowded with busy people landing cargo and clearing it from the Customs, the whole harbour presents a scene of the greatest animation that naturally gives one the impression that Freetown must be enjoying remarkable prosperity. Yet that can scarcely be the case; for, as one soon discovers, Freetown, although undoubtedly a distributing centre, is of itself a non-productive place. It makes nothing and it grows nothing.

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The people are for the most part living from hand to mouth, and trading upon one another. The great cargoes that are landed are transported principally to the Hinterland for the use of the aborigines, who exchange their raw produce—that is, the wealth of the land—for these imported goods.

It is in the wide Hinterland that the people are acquiring the taste for European imports. There is ample scope for commerce all over the Protectorate, and would be much more so if the people could only be taught to develop their natural wealth by cultivation of the ground, and by the use of machinery save much of their labour, now wasted in the mere cracking of palm-nuts one by one—which in itself consumes an enormous amount of time—for agriculture that would pay them really well. Even as it is, the up-country people are both consumers and producers, while the Freetown community consumes but produces nothing; and the European trader seems content to let things be as they are, or, as one of the leading African merchants said to me in Liverpool: “We are satisfied with what we are getting without introducing new things to the people.”

In spite of the changes he can hardly fail to see around him, the typical European trader strongly objects to give even a passing thought to anything except what he considers his own business. The development of the country through cultivation, and the utilisation of its unused wealth of natural products, are questions which many a trader refuses to entertain for a moment, much less debate. If some one attempts to put them before him, he is promptly confronted by the too well-known remark: “I’m here to buy the produce that’s brought to my store and to sell my imported goods; that’s what I’m here for.”

With few exceptions the European’s cry is: “Trade, trade, trade! Bring us palm-oil and palm-kernels! We don’t care where they come from, or how the oil is made or the kernels obtained, or what labour it is to get them down to us, all we want is to get them, and so long as we get enough of them we are satisfied.”

As I have already said, I went out to the West Coast in 1871,

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and practically the lines upon which the British agent worked then are those he works on now. In those days his business horizon was bounded by palm-oil and palm-kernels—and palm-kernels and palm-oil bound his horizon still. When I have discussed the question of extending operations, the reply has generally been: "We are not here for running about the country, that is the work of the Government. Let them keep the country quiet that trade may come through to us and we will buy it. That is what we are here for."

Several of the young agents, although buying palm-oil from the natives, have told me they do not even know how it is obtained, and that it is not their business to find out. It is quite enough for them to know how to buy it.

During all my journeys I have scarcely met a European agent travelling in unbeaten tracks; he sticks at his factory, or goes along the well-known roads or water-ways to take stock at his sub-factories, and then his interest in the country and people appears to end. Indeed, one of the leading British mercantile agents in Freetown said to me the other day, when I asked him if he had been up the country since the opening of the railway: "No, I have never been on the railway, and have not the slightest intention of going. My business is in Freetown, and that is good enough for me;" adding, "I wish they'd take all missionaries and drown them in the harbour," implying that they were, in his opinion, an interference with his commercial progress.

Everybody is held to be entitled to express his own views upon all subjects; but from a man of these sentiments, what can be expected by way of development either of the country or of the people?

As a rule there is no making the average European trader understand that this is a very short-sighted way of doing business. If he expects to succeed—especially if he is working in the country in the midst of the aborigines—his principal object should be to ingratiate himself with them, and study them in every particular. Hinterland people are extremely sensitive, they readily perceive when they have amongst them a European trader on whom they can rely, and when they have discovered

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one, they greatly appreciate and respect him. Happily some such men are to-day to be found in the Colony and Protectorate ; I have met several, and have observed with the keenest pleasure their friendly dealings with the natives, and how their stores have been patronised, solely from their kindly treatment of the people, the trouble they have taken with them, and the interest that they have shown in them and in their country. Usually this great method of successful trading takes a few years to acquire, but in many cases I fear it is never attained at all.

How well I remember an incident that occurred some few years ago when the Governor, Sir Francis Fleming, was about to proceed to the notable town of Bandasuma, in the Barri country, to meet the Upper Mendi chiefs whom I had recently brought into treaty with the Government. His Excellency thought with me that this would be a good opportunity for the representatives of the large European houses in Freetown to meet these chiefs, many of whom had never before left their own countries, and who knew little or nothing of Europeans and their imported wares. Here, we thought, was a fine opening for the merchants to speak to these now friendly chiefs about trade and to open up business relations with them ; so before I went up-country to invite the chiefs to the meeting and bring them down to Bandasuma, I had the Governor's permission to intimate to the European merchants the pleasure it would give him if they could be present at the meeting, with a view to extending their trade into the interior and to developing the country.

I therefore called upon one of the principal European agents and outlined the matter to him. This was his reply : "Damn the country, what have I to do with it? I am here to buy produce and not to go running about the place. It is for you to keep the country peaceful and to see that the trade comes down. I shan't go."

As I felt pretty sure that this was the reply I was likely to get all the way round, and that evidently no one took any interest in the matter, I did not trouble to go further ; and so a unique chance, which might have led to considerable extension of business, was lost ; for when the meeting was held, although

some four thousand chiefs and people were present, the European merchants of Sierra Leone were conspicuous by their absence. If, however, the European merchant will not trouble himself about the up-country people, somebody else will. And that brings us to his already powerful rival, the Syrian trader.

Within the last ten years the Syrian trader has annexed the West Coast; he has come, and come to stay. He is already a very formidable rival to the Sierra Leone trader. He is more than a clever man of business; his tact is wonderful, amounting almost to genius. He lays himself out to study the country people, and he succeeds wherever he goes. His ways are his own, but whatever they may be they turn in the money.

When he first arrived only a few years since, in ones and twos, he was a mere common pedlar, going about Freetown with a board set out with a few small articles in front of him, and its strap round his neck; his stock in trade in those days consisting principally of imitation coral beads made of celluloid.

This in itself was a paying dodge, as before he came real coral was sometimes very costly. A big chief would, for instance, give as much as £2 or £3 for a single bead, or £50 for a string; so when the Syrian offered his imitations at a few pence they met with a ready sale. With this the trade in real coral ceased, and to-day the genuine article can scarcely be seen.

His success caused him to enlarge his business, and he added numerous small articles of the cheapest and commonest description, such as tawdry mirrors, iron pocket-knives, pomatum, an assortment of cheap beads and of the lowest kind of so-called jewellery, while his little board gave place to a small wooden box, which he opened out before him as he stood on the road.

Finding that wherever he went he was successful, and that he had attained the dignity of a country name, "The Corals," he let his family and friends at home know, and they came out in considerable numbers not only to Sierra Leone but all along

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the coast. They are now to be found not only in the larger towns, but itinerating wherever there is any kind of communication, either by rail, water, or land transport.

Nowadays, instead of these Syrians being mere pedlars selling small articles for pence, they are competing merchants, buying produce first-hand wherever they can get it; and that they are accumulating wealth and rapidly becoming a powerful community is beyond a doubt.

One of these men will come out with his wife and perhaps one young child. They live, like any ordinary native, on "country chop." Both man and woman work desperately hard; everything with them is work and money. The husband and wife pull together and appear devoted to each other. You never see them drinking; they seem to have set their faces resolutely to accomplish the task before them—that is, to make in about five years enough to enable them to return to their country and set up a home among their own people.

They are always respectably dressed, well-behaved, and find considerable favour with the country people of all the various tribes.

Evidently the principle of their great and growing success is the method upon which they transact their business and the unity which exists among them as a body. Apparently they are not competing with each other, but have a system of co-operation.

They are now able to buy in wholesale quantities, and then share out among themselves, instead of each buying what he wants for his own individual business. They ask for no credit; they plank down the money for whatever they buy, no matter how large the amount; consequently their reputation with the European firms stands at the highest point.

With this system of buying they start with a little advantage, and as their open stores are now to be found in practically every street in Freetown, to say nothing of the suburbs, the Sherbro, and of the Protectorate, they are enabled to take very large quantities of goods and to reap a corresponding profit.

They do not, however, make large profits in Freetown itself:

there they are content with the "nimble ninepence," and while many of them sit down in their stores, there are still some who perambulate the city as pedlars, employing a native to carry a box or two of their little wares.

The commercial success of the Syrian baffles the understanding of the Sierra Leone trader. The Sierra Leone men and women (especially women), who are all born traders, are struck with amazement that these Syrians are succeeding where they are barely living; for it was always thought that if any one could do a business, they could.

They are naturally alarmed at the dimensions the Syrian's commerce is assuming. He is indeed a very serious competitor, but if the Sierra Leonean were wise he might perceive that his rival presents a very striking object lesson if he would only learn it.

The Syrian saves where the Sierra Leonean squanders. He professes nothing; he makes no show; he attends strictly to business. He does not use the parcel post for getting himself an up-to-date costume quite unsuitable to the climate, the height of his Sierra Leone neighbour's ambition. Even on Sundays he is satisfied with quite a working-class suit; while a clean print gown, with a coloured handkerchief tied round her head, suffices for his wife.

No one, except a rival, who observes their quiet, plodding industry and their uncomplaining self-denial, can grudge them what they make;—certainly I cannot.

But do we find that the Sierra Leoneans are taking this lesson to heart? It has now been some years before their eyes, but I fear they have not yet learned it. Are they trying to carry on their businesses on similar lines? Are they as thrifty in their domestic and daily lives as these Syrians? I am certain, from what I have so recently been told by many of the principal Sierra Leoneans—men of position, and whose opinions I greatly value—that they are filled with great concern for the future of the rising Sierra Leonean generation. How, under the present circumstances, with the importing retailing houses on the one hand and the Syrian gleaners on the other, they are to exist, is with them one of the most serious problems

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of the day, one which demands much forethought and consideration from the parents and guardians of the young people.

I believe myself that a future on the land itself is awaiting the Creoles if they only would train their children for it.

The Syrians, however, are still increasing all along the coast. I believe that when I left Africa a few months ago there were no less than 187 of the Syrian traders in Freetown alone. How many there may be in the Colony and Protectorate it is, of course, impossible to say. One thing is certain, they are a trading community that will have to be reckoned with.

In concluding this brief account of the Revolution in Trade in the Metropolis of Freetown, a passing word on the liquor traffic is demanded. It is in West Africa, as everywhere else, a great and difficult question. Early in this chapter I classed the "grog sellers" with the "tobacco dealers," both of whom were formerly regarded as the richest classes of Sierra Leoneans. The same fate has overtaken both; for nowadays the wholesale firms will sell over the counter a bottle of gin for sixpence. But if the importers are to be believed, they would prefer to be without this liquor trade. They say the profits are infinitesimal, the trouble in landing great, the license heavy, the storing and the constant robberies attending its transport an endless worry; but it always proves a distinct attraction, and so, they add, they are obliged to stock liquor in order to get rid of other goods that pay better.

On my last tour when in Freetown I noticed a quite up-to-date character in the streets. For the first time I saw there the "sandwich-man," employed by one of the biggest importing houses to announce to the public that, as they had over-stocked butter, tins containing one pound would be sold at their store at a greatly reduced price.

It was a very strange sight to me, and one which gave rise to many remarks on the modern developments of West African commerce. Well, other times—other methods! But what would the old merchants have said? The good old merchants who never "broke bulk"!

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I was, however not displeased to observe it, as betokening the introduction of other modern methods, slowly but surely to be seen coming over the near horizon. It even inspired a hope that at some not far distant day scientific improvements, greatly needed, would bring about a betterment in the conditions of labour for the aborigines of the country.

CHAPTER X

THE PRINCESS CHRISTIAN MISSION HOSPITAL

IN the month of May in 1907 I bethought myself, one fine Sunday, that I had never been inside that charming Refuge of Mercy, The Princess Christian Mission Hospital; so, ordering my hammock-bearers, I started off, resolved to give myself the pleasure of visiting it.

I reached the Hospital at a rather inconvenient hour, nevertheless I was warmly welcomed by the acting Matron, Sister Penson, the Matron, Sister Everard, being in England on leave, and by Dr. Mayhew, the Medical Officer. I could not help seeing, however, to my regret, that my call was too early, as I was at once aware that a whole string of out-patients was claiming the Doctor's first attention. He was in fact examining one at the very moment I entered, while the Matron, whom I could see in an adjoining room, was busily occupied in making up medicines.

I should have been sorry to have interrupted the work of the early morning, so I intimated that I would proceed to Bishop's Court, which is close by, the little Hospital standing in the episcopal grounds, and that I would presently return; when probably I should be able to see over the wards with a clear conscience.

Bishop's Court is certainly one of the most delightful residences in Sierra Leone; it is approached by a broad and shady avenue of tall palms, flowering frangipane, and other equally decorative trees, while aloes make a border on each side. The grassy lawns beyond the avenue, while not extensive, have an almost park-like effect, from the presence of fine examples of the elegant fan-palm and other tropical trees. Nearer the house they are tastefully laid out in beds of variegated crotons,

the wonderful blending of their soft and delicate colours affording a real joy to those who can appreciate such exquisitely beautiful tints. The residence itself is built apparently for comfort, for while it is sufficiently spacious for the hospitality its owner's position necessarily entails, it is not too large to be an enjoyable home.

The wide verandahs of its two floors run along the entire front, and just when I saw them, on the occasion I am describing, presented the most lovely sight imaginable, being all but concealed by masses of the purple bougainvillea.

The bougainvillea flourishes luxuriantly everywhere in Sierra Leone, but for lavish colour the display at Bishop's Court beat anything I have ever met within the Colony. It was certainly a gorgeous sight, and one to be remembered with pleasure.

The house, of which the lower part is of red laterite and the upper of wood, is prettily designed, is sufficiently commodious, and appears to be altogether an ideal residence for the Bishop of a tropical diocese.

To reach it, however, as it is nearly a couple of miles out of town, one has to pass along roads that are among the narrowest, busiest, and most thickly populated in the whole of Freetown. This, of course, may be a drawback, but when at Bishop's Court, the charm of the distant views over the water, the beauty of the surroundings, and the restful quiet of the whole scene fully compensate for any trifling unpleasantness on the journey; and even this can be avoided, by coming from town by one's own boat, at all events during the fine months of the dry season.

After having a good look round, I found it was about time that I retraced my steps, or rather that my bearers did; so getting into my hammock I returned to the Hospital, by way of a broad approach and a fine cluster of bamboos.

The Hospital lies back from the Fura Bay road, along which runs the permanent track of the Inland Railway. The entrance is through an iron gateway leading to what in England we should call a carriage drive; only here there are no carriages, as horses can rarely live in the Colony. At the

end of this wide drive is the Hospital, a good building with broad verandahs and deep eaves, standing boldly on a cliff overlooking the water, where it naturally catches every sea breeze that is to be had. From the back is obtained an extensive view of the Bullom shore, right opposite, but across several miles of water; while the entrance faces the mountain range covered with perpetual verdure, with villas at different elevations dotted sparsely here and there.

A more excellent position it would have been impossible to select, as, while it has the advantage of the sea breeze, it is on a level with the town and can be conveniently reached by the people, especially by the inhabitants of the very thickly populated district near which it is situated.

The visitor can hardly help noticing that, in the construction of the building, particular attention has been given to ensure as much protection as possible from the tropical heat of the dry season, and the heavy rains of the wet months. The wide eaves are in themselves suggestive of coolness, the roomy verandahs of thoughtful provision for the comfort of the patients, who find in them delightful resting-places in which to lie or sit while they are convalescing and gaining strength for their return to their homes.

There is an open basement underneath the ward which is used as an Out-Patients' Hall. On three mornings of the week here, while patients are waiting their turn to see the doctor, a short, bright Gospel Service is held for them, the rule being that they must attend service if they wish for medical relief. Men, women, and children attend as out-patients; but, with the exception of the private ward reserved for missionaries, no male in-patients are received. The out-patients number about seventy or eighty weekly.

The staff consists of a European Medical Officer, Matron, two Sisters, and four or five African Nurses.

The premises include one large free ward for women and children, one small ward for paying patients, and a ward for European missionaries; consulting room, operating room, where my attention was especially called to the up-to-date operating table; dispensary and dressing room; also rooms

for the accommodation of the staff, and a residence for the European Matron and Sisters.

Upon entering the Hospital I was at once struck by the extreme quiet and order that existed; by the kindly spirit that prevailed; the interest that was taken in the patients, and the general appearance of happiness, contentment, and delightful calm that was everywhere present. The Matron conducted me through the wards, where I saw native women and children lying peacefully in their daintily clean little beds with their white coverlets, nursed by English ladies, a sight most touching to behold. Out of doors was tropical Africa, but within were English wards as carefully appointed as in any Cottage Hospital at home. I venture to think that the English men or women who could pass through these wards unmoved must be few indeed. The familiar uniforms of the nurses with their snowy caps and aprons is an irresistible appeal to the visitor, especially if by experience he can form some kind of estimate of what it must be for English women to work every day, in a tropical climate, from 6 A.M. until 9 P.M. with only a short mid-day rest.

Nowhere have I seen Black and White in such delightful conjunction, for not only are the coloured women patients nursed with sisterly kindness, but others who are not patients are also fellow-helpers in the beautiful work of healing, and are wearing the same spotless uniform as the English ladies; so that the Hospital is conferring a double benefit on the Colony, and is helping to equip a staff of duly qualified native nurses.

And here, let me add, that the native woman has naturally many of the qualities that go to the making of a good nurse; and it appears that the educated coloured lady is rapidly becoming capable of being a skilled trained nurse, in the modern acceptation of that term. It is only lately, however, that the educated native lady, away from her own home, has got over the idea that it was beneath her dignity to engage in any kind of service for which she received payment. It is not long since we had the same idea in England.

"This Hospital," says the latest report, "was opened in

1892 for the express purpose of training African ladies in nursing and in ministering to the spiritual and bodily needs of the sick poor. This benevolent work was commenced by Mrs. Ingham, and is continued as a Diocesan institution under the present Bishop. Her Royal Highness Princess Christian most graciously allowed her name, upon Mrs. Ingham's request through the late Viscountess Knutsford, to be associated with this, the first Mission Hospital on the West Coast of Africa, and expressed her wish to be its Patron. A board of management in Sierra Leone, and a Hospital sub-committee in England, with the Right Reverend the Bishop of the Diocese, control the working of the Hospital and administration of its funds."

I will add a brief mention of the reason that urged Mrs. Ingham, when her husband was Bishop of Sierra Leone, to establish this beautiful little Hospital. Mrs. Ingham was a great worker among the native women, and necessarily saw much of the harm done by the superstitious beliefs and practices prevalent in the country. Fetish "Medicine" she saw was at the root of most evil, and the conviction arose in her mind that, if its power were really to be undermined, it could only be by a Medical Mission, to establish which she set herself strenuously to work until her efforts were crowned by the opening of the present Hospital. Its supporters have never yet sought in vain for the funds necessary to carry on the work, although they often wish they were more ample, as several improvements are now required.

My visit to the Hospital will always remain among the most pleasant memories I have of Sierra Leone. I shall never forget how touched and impressed I was to see the English nurses going about their work so kindly and quietly; and I am sure from the way their dusky patients followed these devoted ladies with their eyes as they silently moved from bed to bed, that many a native woman or child nursed back to health in those wards will never forget their brief sojourn in the Princess Christian Mission Hospital, nor fail to be the better for the Christian influences of this delightful little haven of rest.

Since writing the above I was present at the last annual meeting of this Hospital at Wilberforce Hall, at the end of April 1908, when it was announced that grants to the amount of £200 per annum hitherto allowed from England were about to be discontinued. An urgent appeal for funds to meet this deficiency was consequently made; and as the Freetown people are quite alive to the admirable work the Hospital is doing, let us hope that the work will not be crippled for want of money.

Unfortunately, this building was entirely destroyed by fire on the 17th of March 1909, but immediate steps were taken for its reconstruction.

CHAPTER XI

THE MOUNTAINS AND THE MOUNTAIN VILLAGES

“The Mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the Sea.”

THE mountains—with a difference certainly—look down on Freetown; and when mountains look down on the crowded dwellings of human beings, they have a tendency to draw men to attempt their ascent. This is especially the case with the European sojourner in such a congested place as the capital of Sierra Leone, who can never quite get used to its insanitary conditions and its none too savoury odours, nor lose the habit of finding himself growing very limp after a short stay there.

Fortunately it is not difficult nowadays for him to escape to one of the charming villages that lie up above among the mountains.

Of these the best known are Leicester, Charlotte, Gloster, and Regent, the first named being distant about three miles and a half, and the last about five miles and a half from the city.

These distances would be, of course, nothing on a level, but, as mountainous roads must be climbed, to reach even the nearest is a very trying journey.

Going in the direction opposite the Harbour, passing the Victoria Gardens, and continuing along the Regent Road on the low level, you soon reach the beginning of the steep ascent, where you leave the houses behind you and enter an excellently kept hard laterite road cut between the trees and the bushy vegetation. It is in fact cut along a ridge, and as every step

takes you higher you are soon looking down upon Tower Hill Barracks and getting a view that enables you to notice how well they are placed, and makes you fancy that the central elevation on which they stand must have been left by nature on purpose for them to occupy; so admirably do these barracks command practically every leading street in the town; the grassy slopes all round them being kept as a wide space free from houses and trees.

Here and there peeps are to be had of the Cantonments of the Native West African Regiment on the distant hill at Wilberforce, as well as of the Harbour down below.

In a few minutes a narrow turning will bring you into a well-kept military road, cut through glades of great beauty, leading to the high barracks at Mount Oriel, just below the still higher military quarters (1130 feet) at Kortright Hill.

From these elevations the views are superb, and make you feel that you have been transported to a country of transcendent beauty. In a panorama of very wide extent a great part of the peninsula of Sierra Leone is unfolded, through which, interspersed with islets, the silvery Rokel is seen winding like a serpent of interminable length, through densely wooded scenery, up to Mabeli some fifty miles away. Few who see this wonderful view can ever forget it.

Proceeding along the Regent mountain road, a little farther on, a narrow turning takes us by a shady lane, cut in very sharply angulated zigzags, up to the Government Sanatorium, a truly delightful bungalow known as "Heddle's Farm."

This property owes its name to the fact that, before the Government acquired it, it belonged to a very prominent European member of Council, the late Hon. Charles Heddle.

This place is probably unique amongst the numerous mountain sanatoria of Sierra Leone. It is the oldest, and occupies a position of perfect isolation on the side of the mountain, at a height of about 600 feet above the city. On three sides it nestles in the dense woods, while the front looks

on to the town and harbour, all spread out below as if on a map.

The bungalow itself stands upon stone pillars, the wooden framework painted a cool grey. It has seven jalousie windows in front, and at the side is an open-sided room in which during the dries meals can be taken *al fresco*. The house is arranged for coolness and real comfort; it is most refreshingly clean, admirably kept, and, to my way of thinking, is altogether an ideal hillside residence, neither too near the town nor too far from it; a place of peaceful rest and absolute quietude, but from which not only the general plan and configuration of Freetown can be observed, but the houses, the streets, with the trains curling through them, may be seen distinctly without the aid of binoculars.

From Heddle's Farm you can notice the streets laid out at equal distances, running in perfectly straight lines from the hills to the harbour and intersected by the main roads, the whole town appearing as a great uniform block of parallelogram form, whence the long country thoroughfares radiate to the foot of the mountains.

The last time I visited Heddle's Farm was in the month of April 1908. The heat was intense, and caused a haziness over the wide expanse of sea, hiding much of it, so that the Bullom shore on the opposite side of the Rokel estuary—generally clearly seen—was quite indistinguishable. But in the harbour, where every detail was plainly visible, a very lively scene might be observed; for among the numerous ocean-going steamers then at anchor there was one of the newest and finest of the Elder-Dempster Company's fleet—the *Mendi*. This steamer had only arrived in port, from the dear old country, about three hours earlier, and no doubt the hearts of many residents in Freetown had already been gladdened by receiving the letters its mail had brought.

The great vessel was lying placidly at rest, but a flotilla of shore boats and steam launches was continually plying between her and the shore. I could distinctly see that the Blue Peter was already flying at her fore, and I knew that soon the liner would be continuing her journey to the Gold Coast with her

passengers and news; for at present these steamers are not cargo boats to this place, and only remain in port long enough to put their Freetown mails and passengers ashore.

From this height, too, the red laterite of Freetown harmonises pleasantly with the light colouring of the houses and their grey roofs. The Barracks on Tower Hill are of course well in evidence; a little lower down part of the red roof of Government House is seen peeping through the thick mango trees that surround it, while still lower is the Cathedral, its tower standing out clearly against the skyline above the harbour. All the buildings in Water Street show distinctly, and beyond the Railway Station is a copse of trees known as the Eastern Battery, concealing its subterranean fortifications; and round the point is Susan's Bay, with its busy shore, so well known in the mercantile world as a place for the purchase and shipping of produce, and as the coaling station.

To the west the eye passes many public buildings until it arrives at Kru Bay and another Battery at King Tom's Point. This western side of the town, although crowded, is not quite so much so as the eastern, and contains many very good houses. As we look down upon it we see that here, as elsewhere, there is a distinct difference between the East End and the West End. Many trees everywhere break up a town view that would otherwise tend to monotony, but which, taken in connection with the wild beauty of the hills and the broad expanse of sea, make up a scene of surprising tropical charm.

Returning again to the Regent mountain road, and still going upward, we notice that the side bushes are now brightened by a profusion of small pinkish flowers. These are the blossoms of the lantana, a pretty but very common shrub, which, from the simplicity of its planting and its rapid growth, is most useful for hedges. It has a pleasing effect, but the flowers have too pungent a scent to make them welcome in houses, fragrant as they are in the open air.

Occasionally we meet the lavanthus, a red-flowered mistletoe, parasitical on guava, coffee, and other shrubs; also the

familiar locust tree, with its long green pods hanging in clusters, and a species of mimosa with a very delicate little flower, the upper part of which is yellow and the lower purple.

In less than an hour the village of Leicester is reached, a quaint little straggling place inhabited by market-gardeners and the ladies who do much of the laundry work of Freetown—a very considerable and important trade.

These good ladies are a wonderfully hard-working set. They travel long distances to fetch and return the clothes. It has often amazed me to see a continuous stream of them laboriously pounding their way with bare feet up these mountain roads under the blazing sun, carrying bundles that are simply gigantic on their heads. Without murmuring, up they go to their different villages week by week. I have frequently wondered, as I have noticed the perspiration pouring down their dusky faces, how they could accomplish so trying a task, and have been compelled to express my admiration for the energy, the good temper, and the never-failing punctuality with which they carry out their part of this very necessary business.

Leicester Peak, 1,954 feet above sea-level, is naturally the chief feature of this neighbourhood, which can only be reached by a hard climb over rocky boulders.

On the way are passed a few bungalows, chiefly hill sanatoria for the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and the American United Brethren Missions.

This last, Bethany Cottage, occupies higher ground than the others, being only 500 feet below the peak, and is built on a rocky mountain ridge.

It is a thoroughly homely health resort, a low wooden cottage painted in cool grey, with green shutters, completely isolated, with the peak above it, and in front, beyond a grassy slope of about a hundred feet, broken, amorphous boulders upon the edge of a deep chasm, over which you gaze down on verdure-clad valleys and in the distance see a bird's-eye view of Freetown.

I enjoyed the hospitality of Bethany Cottage for a week-end last April. It was brilliant weather, when red hibiscus,

frangipane, and white spider lilies were in full bloom. Lounging in my most comfortable rökhee chair, chatting with pleasant companions while taking in the beauty of the scenery, it was really quite delightful; so that for the time we felt contented and at peace with all mankind, and affectionately inclined even towards the West Coast of Africa, which with all its faults is able to provide us with enchantingly beautiful scenery, pure air, and most needful repose.

These sanatoria are used during the dries by the missionaries of the various Churches when run down by the climate and over-work, and better sites for recuperation they could hardly find.

On one of the April days I have just mentioned, at 4.30, when the sun was well on the wane, we climbed with much exertion the remaining 500 feet to the summit of the Peak. This we found on arriving to be a fairly level plateau, short and narrow, among a mass of large blocks of rock, with a few shrubs and sparse tufts of grass dotted about. A short stone pillar bore the following inscription:—

L
1954
C.S.S.
1904.

From this height of 1,954 feet a clear, all-round view is obtained, the very best I have ever had, as it includes everything for an immense distance. To the north in very clear weather may be traced the opposite coast-line leading up to the French possessions of the Isles de Los and Konakri, and near by is the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, which was thought to be the highest of the range until Major Pearson, in his survey of 1904, found that this distinction belonged to an adjacent peak.

The sun was now about to set; the wildness of the hills, and the ruggedness of the sharply-cut mountain skyline was very boldly outlined, while over all spread the exquisite purple blush that is so charming and well remembered a characteristic of a British landscape when the heather is in bloom. All around, everything was clad in verdure of some kind, from the

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densely wooded hillside to the smaller vegetation in the valleys.

Not far below, nestling in one of the many green valleys, we made out the pretty village of Regent, with its little Anglican church on its highest point, a point almost lost by its contrast with the great mountains surrounding this picturesque little hamlet. The village church is again a pleasant reminder of the Old Country.

The whole scene filled us with admiration of the wonderful beauty of Nature, and compelled us to linger and watch the sun until it dropped below the distant horizon of the Atlantic amid a splendour of colour which for brilliancy and delicacy surpassed all human description. Those who have watched the sunsets on tropical seas will, however, have no difficulty in recalling their extraordinary beauty and magnificence.

But twilight is brief in West Africa, so we were soon on our way back to Bethany Cottage.

THE VILLAGE OF GLOUCESTER

We will return to the Regent mountain road, which at some little distance descends by a valley shaded by luxurious trees to the village of Gloucester. As you approach, you unexpectedly come upon one of those sweet surprises in which these mountains abound. You are here suddenly in a little dell, so picturesque and quiet that you are compelled to stop and admire it. The stillness is broken only by the trickling music of the silvery water of a rivulet softly running in little cascades over the low terraced rocks, under the over-spreading limbs of the large bread-fruit tree, with its curiously digitated leaves, so distinctively tropical. Clusters of young bamboos and of a profusion of bracken like our own familiar species grow right down to the water's edge. It is altogether a delicious resting-place to meet suddenly on a hot day.

Crossing the little bridge, you come upon a small open space, used, I believe, as a market, although I have never seen any one or anything in it.

To the left is the road to the village of Charlotte, noted

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for its beautiful waterfalls, while to the right, by a series of switchback undulations, a wide and well-kept road leads to the village of Gloucester. These villages are considered by the Freetown people "suburban." Gloucester contains a good many villas, and in all the compounds quantities of coffee trees are in evidence, and, at the time I last passed through the place, all in bloom, filling the air with a perfume as delicate as are the dainty little white flowers growing so profusely along the branches. The coffee bears a most bewitching little blossom—as ephemeral, however, as it is lovely—literally on the bough to-day, and on the ground to-morrow.

Leaving Gloucester, there is nothing of importance to attract us until in about an hour the village of Regent, lying low in the valley, opens up before us.

REGENT

As its name implies, this village was settled during the Regency. It is one of the oldest of the "suburbs," and was originally a location for captured and liberated slaves. It contains some excellent country villas, all of which are occupied by Sierra Leoneans, who, as in the other suburban villages, live principally by their market gardens.

By a road through the mountain valley, Wilberforce can be reached, from whence communication to the city may be had by means of the Mountain Railway.

A delightful sense of restfulness as well as of extreme beauty steals over one as Regent bursts upon the view, in its quiet valley amid its lofty and densely wooded mountains. Whether we see it from the heights of Leicester Peak or come upon it from its hilly approach, Regent must always remain in the memory as one of the prettiest villages of Sierra Leone.

SUGAR-LOAF MOUNTAIN

To the right of the valley in which Regent lies is the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, a summit of the range that the new-

comer can hardly help seeing, as he is pretty sure to have it pointed out to him from the open roadstead many times before he leaves the steamer that has brought him out.

The Sugar-Loaf is very much talked about, but I suspect that the majority of persons, natives as well as Europeans, are content with the distant view, and do not attempt to explore its heights.

I must confess I never did so myself until upon a recent tour, when I felt impelled to attempt the ascent. It so happened that I was staying at Regent at the house of my old friend Major Ross (who, I may incidentally mention, has not been to England since 1871). My host had kindly furnished a friendly guide for me and my carriers, and I had for companion the Rev. R. P. Dougherty, M.A., the genial Principal of the American Albert Academy; so I naturally looked forward to an entertaining and interesting climb.

After passing through some old cassada farms, all of which were, of course, upon the slopes, we went upwards by steep gradients over very broken, rocky ground, and then through a deep gorge, all covered with grass, shrubs, and trees. At the end of half-an-hour's walking, we turned off to the right, and began the actual ascent of the Sugar-Loaf itself by passing through a cold, dark, and dank primeval forest on a steep escarpment. The ground was a mass of large boulders and stones covered with green slippery lichen, the surroundings harmonised to a soft and delicate tone by the thick foliage of the trees.

We pounded on for another half-hour, when, coming to an opening of bare rock in the forest, we sat down for a breather high up on the mountain side.

Looking down, we saw numerous deep and angulated valleys between the hills, and got a short view of the winding Rokel in the distance. All around was nothing but the forest-covered mountains, with here and there more patches of bare rock surface.

Then came an exhausting hour's climb, relieved by many short stoppages. My friend did not suffer so severely as I did, but when at last we reached the summit I was abso-

lutely done up, with every stitch of my clothes sopping with perspiration.

The height is only 2,496 feet, but the constant difficulties of all kinds, and the labour of getting from boulder to boulder on a steep and slippery escarpment in the tropics, made things very far from pleasant, and set me blowing like a whale, while my heart was beating at a pace that made me feel quite sick. It was quite beyond any previous experience I had had in West African mountaineering.

On reaching the top, I stretched myself out full length on the parched-up grass that covered the rock, while my boys proceeded to peel off my wet garments and to rub me down with a bath towel I had fortunately thought might be needed, and had brought with me, together with a change of underwear.

After a time, with a slight breeze blowing upon me, I began to return to my normal condition of moderate moistness, and was able to partake of some "potted tin" and other modest light refreshment.

When we had had enough, the remainder was handed over to our boys, to some of whom this was the first introduction to canned provisions.

It was amusing to watch the curious and sceptical manner with which they tried tiny pieces, until assured by the taste that the food was good; but as soon as they got the real flavour they lost little time in showing their appreciation. Importers will no doubt be satisfied that we gave our boys a good practical object lesson, convinced that the native only needs to know tinned stuff to like it; and as what he likes he will buy if he can, this will naturally lead to the further development of the imported food business in the course of time.

After this little *al fresco* meal, I found it was necessary to make some further change in the lower part of my too tightly clinging underclothing.

I therefore got inside a small, tumble-down grass shed, which would have made me an admirable dressing-room had the grass roof been intact; but as only about half of it

remained, the shed was as much a public as a private apartment. However, with the aid of an old bottled-beer case, which we discovered among the bushes, and a judicious arrangement of the garments I had already discarded—as portières—I was enabled to rig up an airy but sufficiently comfortable retiring place in which to sit *in puris naturalibus*, with the breeze blowing refreshingly upon me until we were ready to begin the homeward descent.

The day was by no means propitious for obtaining long-distance views from this elevation, which, as we read on a low stone pillar, was 2,496 feet; for the air was full of rapidly passing light mists that, more frequently than not, enveloped the whole surroundings. However, in the deep dips of the rugged outlines of the range were visible parts of Freetown, and also Mount Oriel, while in the depths of the valleys immediately beneath us was the peaceful village of Regent, showing quite a good-sized hamlet with well-planned roads, and to the right beyond were distinctly seen the villages of Bathurst and Charlotte. On the low ground, when the sun appeared for a few moments, were observed the Rokel River and the Waterloo Creek. Little could be seen of the far distance in the Sherbro direction—although it is said, and no doubt correctly, that in clear weather the south-east coast as far as the Plantain Islands is visible. On the other side, the nearer places of Lumley, Goderich, Hamilton, and the bungalows at Hill Station and the cantonments at Wilberforce could be picked out. The Atlantic, of course, was right in front, but so enveloped in mist that it was practically invisible.

The little plateau forming the summit of the Sugar-Loaf is smaller than that at Leicester Peak, and is made up of rocky lumps covered by dry grass and surrounded by shrubs—not at all an inviting place to select for a picnic party.

After the cooling-down process had been sufficiently carried out, the question of the return journey had to be considered. I had fortunately bethought me to bring, along with the bath towel, an under-vest and Balbriggan continuations—knowing my porous constitution only too well; and the discarded vestments being still in a pulpy state, I was very glad that I had

done so. But the difficulty with me was the knowledge that my fresh things, if put on, would certainly not remain dry for ten minutes, so that, there being no large foliage to the trees from which to improvise a "summer suit," I had *nolens volens* to adorn myself with the spacious towel and, with the addition of white boots, socks, and a Panama hat, to wend my way down through the forest. I found this even worse than the toil of ascending, as dropping from one boulder to another brought one of fourteen and a half stone weight down with considerable shaking force, and when once "on the jumps" on a steep mountain side, it was not always an easy matter on slippery lichen to bring oneself to the stopping point, nor did I succeed in doing it without sundry falls; however, I got none of the heart-battering process and no quick breathing.

Travelling light, I thought I was doing well and feeling comfortable, although cascades of perspiration were streaming from those parts of my body uncovered. But in spite of all difficulties we got down without accident, and when nearing Regent we stopped in a secluded spot, sat down to cool, and regaled ourselves with a plentiful supply of delicious locust beans, which we picked from the trees around, and which afforded a welcome repast to our boys, who had had none too much food during the day, and who would get nothing until our return to Freetown some few hours later.

Having got sufficiently cool to allow of my clothing myself in my dry things, we proceeded to the little village of Regent, where we were again welcomed by my old friend, who soon had a refreshing cup of tea ready for us. This was very acceptable, as our water-bottles had run dry. We then retraced our way to Freetown, arriving there just before sundown, having had a long day of twelve hours from start to finish.

As I have implied, it was a disappointing and laborious climb. The Sugar-Loaf is a place to toil up once, for the sake of saying that you have been to the top of the Sugar-Loaf Mountain, which so many talk about, but so few know about. I have no intention of troubling it again, because I infinitely prefer Leicester, which is reached quickly and without too much exertion, though quite enough for the tropics. At

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Leicester the delights when there amply repay you for the fatigue, but as for the Sugar-Loaf, my advice to any one who may be tempted to try its ascent is, "Don't," unless you are an enthusiastic "bug" hunter, as it and the adjacent mountains enjoy the reputation of being the best in the Colony for that occupation, although I must admit, on the occasion of my visit I was singularly unfortunate in not meeting with any specimens of Lepidoptera of special interest.

CHAPTER XII

THE MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

A FEW years ago, Freetown becoming very much overgrown and over-crowded, it was thought advisable to open up a hill-station for the European officials and others, and a beautiful site on Wilberforce Hill, overlooking the North Atlantic, 800 feet above sea-level, was chosen.

This was a most desirable spot, only five miles from Freetown, but there was no suitable road by which to reach it comfortably, nor was there any means of communication other than by hammock, so a mountain railway was planned, and was opened on the 1st March 1904.

This railway starts from the Water Street Terminus, and proceeds through the streets of the town in a westerly direction to its first stopping-place, on the Pademba Road. The halt is under the enormous boughs of a huge cotton tree, one of the biggest in the place, which shelters the combination ticket-box and waiting-room. This is "The Cotton Tree Station."

A few minutes later the neat little "Campbell Street Station" is reached. It stands in a populous neighbourhood, which, however, is soon left behind, and the ascent of the beautiful hills begins as an agreeable and welcome change. The Golf Links come into view, through a part of which the train wends its way.

The track of the railway runs by a circuitous route along the mountain side, and as often as not is hidden from sight by the density of the bush. Some of its curves are remarkably sharp, but everything works without a hitch.

It must have been a difficult piece of engineering, and strikes one as having been carried out with unquestionable

skill. The delicately curved iron bridge over the gorge by Kongo Town is particularly noticeable. As we proceed higher and higher, delightful scenes unfold themselves, until, just before entering the little station of Lumley Road, we see far below the irregularities of the sharply delineated coast-line. This is always an enchanting sight, but the line is often made even more than usually definite by the foamy edge of the water as it ripples to and fro upon the sandy beach, scintillating in prismatic colours in the dazzling tropical sun.

Just beyond is the stopping-place for the West African Regiment Cantonment, occupying a most lovely site; but in Sierra Leone all the barracks are situated on the hills and mountains.

Then comes the Hill Station Terminus, only a few minutes farther on, from which we get a magnificent panoramic view of Freetown as well as the configuration of the coast, with its inlets and bays. We can hardly help being amazed at its excessive beauty, and find it difficult to believe that the country below us ever had, and unfortunately too well deserved, its deadly reputation as "The White Man's Grave."

But I am recalling it as I saw it recently on a brilliant afternoon, that would have been insufferably hot had it not been for the strong sea breeze that tempered the heat—heat in which I was thoroughly revelling when at length I reached the official bungalows. What a change it is from Freetown!

Hill Station should be, and indeed from all accounts is, as perfect a health resort as is to be found on the coast-line of West Africa; and the Government is not only to be heartily congratulated on its choice of the site, but deserves the individual thanks of all those who are fortunate enough to reside there, for having provided so great a boon as these bungalows, where comfort, rest, change, and sea breezes are to be enjoyed—an incalculable improvement indeed upon the unhealthy town quarters of former times.

On one spur of Wilberforce Hill are twenty-one of these bungalows, looking across the village of Lumley to the North Atlantic, and getting all the breezes that are to be had from ocean, land, and mountains. From the broad verandahs of

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every bungalow a different view is obtained, each in its own way equally beautiful.

The bungalows are well supplied with water from the Kongo stream; the dam is 1,100 feet above sea-level, and is situated on the northern side of Leicester Peak.

Some of these bungalows are very spacious and most conveniently arranged; so well arranged indeed and so healthy that several of the officials have their wives with them—a great advantage not only for companionship, but as saving the expense of a separate establishment at home, which is a consideration with officials who are not over-paid.

I am certain the officials greatly value this change from town, which enables them to leave the fetid atmosphere of the valley for the pure air of the mountains, where the nights are refreshingly cool, mosquitoes are rare, netting being hardly needed, and where they can sleep in peace and return the following morning to their duty, fit for the day's work.

They leave the Hill Station at 8.30 A.M., reaching Freetown at nine, returning in the afternoon by the 3.30 train from the "Cotton Tree."

Each bungalow stands on its own ground, a liberal space being allotted for the garden. The residents take a keen interest in gardening. Although so new and on rocky ground, these hill-top gardens are already flourishing.

In them I noticed roses and lilies besides the brilliant hibiscus and the variegated crotons, with the beautiful bougainvillea climbing over the fronts of the verandahs. Everywhere there is a wealth of flowers and of vegetation; the pine-apple flourishes on the rocky ground, and some specimens of the large "Tchokor" trees are seen growing wild.

Amusement and recreation are not forgotten. There is an excellent tennis ground and croquet lawn, and a great deal of pleasant social intercourse. Altogether the Hill Station is a very delightful change from the old life in Freetown with its unhealthy surroundings.

To those who prefer it, there is now a very good roadway by which they can either hammock or walk down from Hill Station to Freetown. Leaving the bungalows, you very soon

lose sight of the sea and become shut in by the high bush, but travelling is capital, and there are many houses to be met with on the way. After getting clear of the bungalows by a circuitous pathway, the descent is gradually made to Wilberforce, where there are some grand specimens of silk-cotton trees with extraordinarily long and high-standing roots with wide interstices between the massive buttresses, radiating like the feelers of an enormous octopus from the base of the trunk. Continuing through the village along the path of the shady glade, the imposing array of canvas tents of the Native West African Regiment is passed, and so on to the Lumley Road and thence to Murray Town Station, a pretty little place leading to the town of that name, where the usual petty trading comes into evidence again, and becomes much more so as you push on to Kongo Town and Soldier Town, which presently bring you over the bridge and into the crowded Kru Town road, and so to the city.

In every town passed there is a church or chapel. It is a pleasant semi-suburban walk, and if undertaken in the afternoon is not too fatiguing, but it is altogether a different matter when going the reverse way.

At Wilberforce Hill is the station whence all incoming vessels are signalled by means of flags to Freetown. In clear weather vessels may be descried upon the horizon from twenty to twenty-five miles distant.

At the moment of sighting a cannon is fired, and as soon as the vessel is made out as coming from north or south, and whether a steam ship or a sailer, it is shown by a simple flag code.

The little journey by the Mountain Railway occupies only half-an-hour; so if we go up by an afternoon train we have good time to call upon a few friends, take a cup of tea and a short stroll in which to enjoy the lovely sea breezes, before we leave the residents to their tennis and return to Freetown.

It is to be regretted that the mercantile community has not yet taken advantage of the hills for the erection of bungalows for their employees. Possibly before long they will see the advisability of doing so, for there can be no doubt of the saving

in health and life that is effected by spending the night in the fresh mountain air, to say nothing of the increased energy and capacity for business that the daily change produces. Up on the hills the spirits are buoyant, but all that exhilaration of feeling and of enjoyment amid the wild natural charms of the mountains is unknown to the unfortunate European who rarely leaves Freetown, but plods on wearily in the fetid atmosphere of the overcrowded city, with its unsanitary conditions and unsavoury odours, with the deadly old limpness and lethargy always weighing him down. The Mountain Railway should reduce the still heavy death-rate among the European employees.

The stations of the Mountain Railway are—Water Street; Cotton Tree; Joaque Bridge; Campbell Street; Brook Fields; Wilberforce (for Murray Town); Lumley Road (for Goderich); the Barracks (West African Regiment); and Hill Station (for Leicester, Regent, &c.).

There are half-a-dozen trains during the day, the earliest from Water Street being at 5.45, and the last at a corresponding hour in the afternoon, while the down trains start at 6.25 and cease running at 6.20 P.M.

Single fares between the termini for first, second, and third-class passengers are respectively 9d., 6d., and 3d., the return fares being 1s. 3d., 10d., and 5d.; while to intermediate stations tickets are issued at proportionately moderate rates.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT RAILWAY

THE reports of the Travelling Commissioners during their five years' work, and the personal observations of the Governors, Sir James Shaw Hay and Sir Frederic Cardew, in their extended tours throughout the Hinterland, resulting in the creation of the Protectorate, made it abundantly clear to the Government that a railway into the interior was imperative, if the people were to be civilised and the enormous resources of the remoter parts of the territory utilised. In 1896, during Sir Frederic Cardew's administration, a Government railway was therefore begun, and continued from Freetown to Songo Town, a distance of thirty-two miles.

For the first twenty miles, until Waterloo is reached, the line is carried along the base of the mountain range, the sides of which rise abruptly on one hand, while on the other are long stretches of open land intersected by the windings of the distant Rokel River and by the Creek, which becomes very narrow as it runs to Waterloo.

For the last twelve miles, up to Songo Town, the country is level and without striking interest. The monotony is, however, broken by the little station of Newton, until recently the headquarters of the engineering department. This is one of the prettiest little stations on the line, as it is entirely isolated, nestling among young palms and other overshadowing trees, with a good open view of the mountains. Songo Town is reached in about half-an-hour from Newton.

The railway was opened for traffic on May 1st, 1899. It took, of course, some time for the people to get used to railway travelling, and also to see the advantage of sending produce to the Freetown markets by train, as they were

naturally slow to realise that although the freight was higher than they had been accustomed to pay for canoe transport, their goods reached the buyer much quicker and consequently in better condition. Canoes, moreover, in bad weather are very unsafe, and at all times there is danger from overloading, as the native "capin," with a keen eye to business, crowds them up as much as possible. As the owner generally travelled with his produce, he soon found out that personally he gained a great deal in comfort and safety by substituting the train for the canoe.

As far as the end of the first section, Songo Town, the trade is mostly of a market-garden and domestic character for the supply of Freetown, and after leaving Waterloo, with its profusion of oil-palms, the scarcity of this all-important tree becomes very apparent. We have in fact run though the oil-palm belt in this direction, and it will be a very considerable distance before we run into it again.

Unless this rich interior oil-belt had been tapped, the railway would never have been a profitable undertaking. Section after section was added until the important town of Bo, 136 miles from Freetown, was reached; but even here, although oil-palms, sometimes in quantities, were seen at intervals, the great forests had not been met; the line was therefore continued for eighty-four miles to Baiima in the Mando country, and throughout the whole of this stretch the oil-palm was found growing everywhere in profusion.

Baiima, which was opened in 1905, was the terminus, but a tramway extension of seven miles to Pendembu in the Upper Bambara country was completed in the year 1908. This leaves only about sixteen miles to the Anglo-Liberian boundary. All this country is rich in oil-palms, camwood, and other indigenous products; the soil is evidently of the most fertile description, and especially suitable for agricultural purposes.

In these few words I have given the merest outline of the railway; but I will now ask you to accompany me on a trip from Freetown to Baiima by train, during which we shall be able to notice the working of the system and to get some little

idea of what effect it is producing on the people that are brought into contact with it.

The terminus of the Sierra Leone Government Railway is situated in Water Street, Freetown. It is a substantial building of native laterite, which includes the general offices, that may remind some people of a small Scotch station in a red sandstone country.

There is nothing peculiar about it, except the fact that it is where it is; but, to those who remember Sierra Leone in earlier days, that a railway of any kind should have a station in Freetown is astounding—indeed, considering the difficulties that had to be met and overcome before that station could stand where it does, must appear to those who have been behind the scenes even more than astounding. The railway itself is a triumph of dogged perseverance in the face of almost overwhelming obstacles, the worst of which was the deadly apathy that used to weigh heavily on the whole Colony. The evil reputation of its climate made most people feel that it was no place for the white man, and therefore not worth spending money upon. Of course Freetown and its neighbourhood had to be kept in good working order for Imperial military and fiscal purposes, and as a coaling depot; but that was all, and it failed to arouse enthusiasm in those who had the control of its finances.

That inertia is now a thing of the past, and those in authority have slowly but surely come to the conclusion that, after all, Sierra Leone is worth developing; that, in fact, it will pay to develop both the Colony and the Protectorate.

The modern resident of Freetown takes the whole railway system as a matter of course. It is nothing remarkable to him to walk into the Freetown booking-place, which is exactly like an English one, and ask at the little ticket window for a "First return to Baiima"; but then he has probably never done that journey by hammock.

Now with me it is different; so that when, on the morning I start on my trip up-country, I hear myself say, "Baiima" as I ask for my ticket, I can hardly believe the report of my senses. I show the ticket to a native collector, pass



A MANDINGO IN FETISH WAR DRESS

He is a mass of "Gre-Gre" charms, each containing a quotation from the Koran in Arabic.



OIL PALMS, NORTHERN SHERBRO

1870

on to a fine covered platform with the train drawn up alongside, the native drivers and stokers on the engines, and the native guards waiting to show us our seats with the greatest courtesy, and find it all such a transformation scene, that even yet I cannot be quite sure that I am not dreaming.

The activity all around and the exercise of a certain amount of reason at last convince me that I am really awake, and actually starting by train over a track that I used to do, as Travelling Commissioner, by hammock.

It is nearly seven o'clock and a brilliant morning as I settle myself in my comfortable cane-seated lounge chair. The sun has already been up for an hour, and the temperature is hot. I am in good time and can look about at leisure.

The platform is crowded with the gaily coloured native costumes peculiar to the different tribes. Here are tall, slim Mandingoes with sandalled feet and flowing white robes, and their distinctive little skull-caps with their beautiful native embroidery. Here a group of Susus in long, close-fitting, sleeveless gowns of a good claret-colour over white. Sierra Leone gentle-folks in elaborate European costumes, native trading women in their stiffly starched prints and their smart wrappers carelessly thrown round one shoulder, and their shining patent-leather shoes, are everywhere in evidence, with the friends who have come to see them off. A penny is however charged, if you want to go on to the platform to see any one start; a very necessary precaution here, as the friends of the native are so many.

Luggage is a thing to be considered by the natives, as only a small amount can be taken without extra charge. The ordinary japanned box is the favourite receptacle, but we observe that the women prefer the oval bonnet-box, locally called "kettle," it is so convenient for carrying on the head. There is an enormous trade done in these imported boxes, which are sold remarkably cheap.

At last all the passengers are in their places, and punctual to the moment the native station-master starts the train in the orthodox British fashion. We proceed cautiously but at a fair rate through the open streets of the town, round

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the Eastern Battery, up East Street, crossing Nichol Brook by an iron bridge, passing through some of the slummy, outlying parts of the town to the first stopping place, "Dove Cot," among the petty traders and in an atmosphere by no means fragrant.

This is our last experience, however, of the peculiar and most unpleasant odour of an over-crowded Freetown neighbourhood. It is soon left behind; we continue along the Furah Bay Road, where the clean sea-breeze reaches us as we pass the Princess Christian Mission Hospital and Bishop's Court. We are now well away, winding round the base of the mountains, and very soon we come to Cline Town, our first important station, where the railway works are situated.

Cline Town railway works deserve very special mention, because they are the principal factor in the successful working of the whole of the railway. It is not only necessary to have a railway, but having got the railway it is of course imperative that there should be engineering works and a personnel, both European and native, capable of dealing with every requirement, to maintain the entire system in an efficient state.

There are certainly no Europeans left who saw horse-racing going on at Cline Town over a recognised race-course, and probably there are very few natives in existence who have any knowledge of it from their own personal observation; but the ground is still referred to—not, indeed, as the race-course, but as the "horse-race"; so that when we to-day see much of Cline Town, and of the race-course in particular, occupied by great engineering works and long carriage sheds, and witness iron horses instead of living animals rushing over the old ground, we cannot fail to be aroused to the extraordinary transformations that have taken place, and those as recently as within the last decade.

Cline Town being a convenient distance from Freetown, was formerly one of the principal suburban places at which the leading European merchants had their bungalows, enclosed within their private grounds. Even now there are evidences in the ornamental laying out of these grounds that in those



The author in front of Bethany cottage at Leicester, which looks down 1500 feet upon Freetown.



GOVERNMENT RAILWAY

The "Horse-shoe" curve after leaving Cline Town station

Mr. O

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terribly unhealthy times of the Colony's existence the European community, then quite a small body, endeavoured to make itself as comfortable as possible, and to regard its personal pleasures as of paramount importance.

In those days steamers to and from the old country were very few and very far between; there was no ocean cable, and such a thing as the construction of a railway to the unknown Hinterland would have been scoffed at as being hopelessly impossible; the very suggestion of so wild a scheme would have been looked upon as climatic lunacy. Yet cable and railway are now accomplished facts. The railway has been the medium of introducing scientific and mechanical means of travelling into the country, and this before long, it is only reasonable to assume, will be followed by other inventions for the saving of both time and labour, and by the gradual disappearance of those semi-barbaric methods of work, which until the railway was made were quite in keeping with the state of the country and of its peoples, but which are irrevocably doomed to vanish before the march of scientific progress in West Africa as in all other parts of the civilised universe.

At Cline Town there are local offices for some of the principal European heads of departments with their native staff; engineering work-sheds with up-to-date steam machinery, and every requisite for the maintenance of the lines—from putting the engines together, to the repairs consequent upon the wear and tear of rolling stock. Carriages and trucks are built there, and in fact these works are capable of dealing with not only the heavy details of running a railway, but of every minute item in connection with it, and also of rendering mechanical assistance to any steamer that may unhappily come into port needing repairs. Besides all this there is the running shed, the carriage shed, the general stores shed, which is 300 feet long, and numerous fine bungalows for the maintenance and assistant-maintenance engineers, the senior traffic manager, and many others. The carriage shed is, in fact, built upon part of the old race-course, of which the remaining portion is utilised as a

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recreation ground. The whole place looks most business-like; all the sheds have spanned roofs of corrugated iron, and everything appears to be most carefully kept in first-class condition.

When I went over the works I had the pleasure of being shown round by the courteous locomotive superintendent Mr. E. G. Barker, who lucidly explained the various details in connection with the different departments. To me it was intensely interesting, as it enabled me to make a further contrast between Sierra Leone of to-day and Sierra Leone as I first knew it in 1871, when the late Sir Arthur Edward Kennedy was the Governor; since which time I have had the pleasure of knowing no less than thirty-four successive representatives of the Government.

Cline Town has the advantage of being near the open water-side and receiving the full benefit of the sea-breezes, with a backing of the mountain range. It is quite a delightful locality for residential quarters, and all the Europeans I met there seemed in the best possible health and spirits.

Immediately beyond the station are two very nice small mosquito-proof houses rejoicing in the names of "Microbe" and "Mosquito," occupied by two of the European staff, one of whom takes a delight in making his little garden the horticultural show of the neighbourhood; while a short distance farther on is the recently built stone bungalow of the locomotive superintendent, Mr. Barker. I must say a few words about this house, because it marks a new departure in the construction of bungalows out here, and appears to be an improvement on the numerous styles that have opened up of late. It has the advantage of being in an ideal position, and to whomsoever the credit of designing a style so suitable for a tropical bungalow may be due, he is to be congratulated upon the successful carrying out of his idea, for it is planned to suit the comforts of the most fastidious occupants. The place has an external appearance of tranquillity and comfort that is more than realised when acquaintance is made with the interior. Outwardly the bungalow looks as if it contained several apartments, but this illusion is dispelled upon entering, for indeed there are very few rooms; but size and airiness have

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taken the place of quantity, there being only two rooms on the lower floor, with a bedroom and small bathroom on the upper storey, which has a very spacious verandah with a cemented floor. With the exception of the bathroom the dimensions are all 20 feet by 20, and the height 11 feet.

As you bring yourself to an anchor by accepting the comfortable chair kindly offered to you by your host in this spacious verandah, you immediately begin to experience that always welcome feeling of being able to inhale fresh air and breathe freely, and you look with calm pleasure on to a quite English landscape, with herds of well-conditioned cattle grazing lazily on the grass fields. Some little distance beyond lies Cline Town proper, the villas of which, in straggling confusion, drift down to the bank of the wide inlet of Cline Bay, the Bishop Crowther Memorial Church showing conspicuously amongst the wooded environment. The whole surroundings have a genuinely healthy appearance; the sea-breezes are if anything rather too strong. Mountains 1,000 feet in elevation approach to about 100 feet of the bungalow; there is an absence of tom-toms and unsavoury odours, delightfully soothing—and indeed it is a place in which a European and his wife should be perfectly happy, and enjoy good health for the period of their twelve months' residential tour.

After leaving Cline Town we proceed close up against the mountains, so close indeed that the train appears to be running right into them; but this is averted by the line describing a very bold curve known as the "horse-shoe." The scenery is naturally exceedingly beautiful, especially as we pass by Granville Brook and open out on the plains which extend for about four miles, and are made up of rocky grass land, upon which are growing many big trees, several being large mangoes and fine old locust trees. Presently we reach Kissy Station, where we see across the fields the village, which lies five miles off from Freetown. Kissy is one of the principal suburbs of Freetown. From the train we can see its Hospital for Incurables. There is also a good church—its tower just visible among the palms; church and hospital being here, as everywhere, welcome reminders of our own far-distant land.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM KISSY TO BO

WHEN we start again from Kissy we cross an iron viaduct 280 feet long and proceed through a country that has many deep gorges, now crossed by bridges, for three miles or so to the villages of Wellington and Hastings.

Only those who have travelled on foot over a deep tropical gorge know what it can mean; and it is only they who can be at all adequately thankful for these railway viaducts. The gorge used to be one of the most formidable obstacles to the traveller, especially when he came upon one unawares. Perhaps after he had managed to struggle through a long stretch of bush or heavily timbered forest, he suddenly saw an enormous chasm yawning before him. How deep it might be he could not tell; it appeared a bottomless abyss. Or he might be in a hammock going along the edge of a gorge, as I have frequently been, when his men would cry:—

“Massa, suppose we go fall down dem place they no go find we again!” A remark that suggests most disquieting possibilities. On one occasion when this was said to me we were fortunately not compelled to cross the gorge at all, but were able to skirt it. I have, however, had many nasty experiences in gorges. I therefore appreciate to its full extent, as I am sure all other old travellers must do, the advantages of being able to cross in safety and comfort the enormous boulders and treacherous waters, all masked by vegetation, of such a piece of ground as that now traversed by the Orogui Viaduct.

This fine bridge has six spans and is 386 feet long, over a very bad piece of land with rocks and water hidden under

the dense growth of shrub. It is a place where you might very easily come to serious grief; I should say, in fact, that if you had broken down there would have been no chance at all for you.

This broad, rocky wilderness, spanned only by a delicate iron bridge little more than the width of the train, is a terrible place to gaze down into even from the security of the railway carriage.

The natives were at first rather nervous about these crossings; but it just shows what confidence they place in the white man that they so soon and so completely learned to trust his bridges, and his trains.

By another long viaduct known as the Maroon, Hastings is reached. Then as we run on for another seven miles to Waterloo, here and there between the mountains we catch sight of the market-gardens that supply Freetown, thirteen miles away, with vegetables.

The run of twenty miles from Freetown, which we have just made along the base of high mountains, has taken us through some of the finest scenery of the whole line. On one hand we have been quite close to the mountain range, on the other there is a fine panoramic view of the country through which the Rokel winds, backed by other far-off and dimly seen mountain ranges. The freshness and beauty of the wooded mountain sides contrast finely, by their sharp outlines, with the view of the open sea, the broad roadstead, and the far-off Bullom country.

Waterloo is a purely Creole town. A number of Sierra Leone people leave the train there. They are constantly going to and returning from Freetown, not only with the produce of their market-gardens, but with wood for fuel, in which they do a very big trade.

Waterloo, unlike Freetown, has always enjoyed a reputation for picturesqueness and salubrity. It was founded soon after the famous battle and so has had plenty of time to mature, and for many years has been one of the principal places in the market-garden district. Its streets are really shady groves of feathery palms, among which nestle well-con-

structed and prettily designed houses, and the surroundings are altogether charming. It is a good place at which to get an insight into real tropical life as it now is, after having long been under civilising influences. It is a delightful point where the newcomer might do well to break the journey. This he can do quite comfortably, as an excellent hotel is the nearest building to the station. It is perhaps not exactly up to the Cecil, the Carlton, or the Ritz, but externally and internally it is sufficiently enticing to be much appreciated by the Europeans who pay week-end visits to it. I did so a short time ago, and find I have a note or two written there, which I will now quote:—

“I am writing this in the sitting-room on the first floor. While doing so the rumble of an approaching down train coming from the far-off station at Bo is heard, the distance has rapidly diminished, and the train is now passing quite close. I should be able to see both it and the station were it not for the jungle of mango trees, cocoa-nuts, and the clusters of banana shrubs that lie between us. The bananas are as yet young, so their graceful paddle-like leaves are still intact, and have not arrived at that fluttering, shredded stage in which this wonderful food tree is usually met.”

“The Ayo-ville Hotel,” for such is the name of this hostelry, boasts a drawing-room, sitting and dining rooms, with several bedrooms, a little enamelled tablet being attached to each door to indicate the description of room. All are most comfortably furnished, the floors being waxed and overlaid with strips of brightly coloured carpet and China matting. White lace curtains adorn the windows, and the sofas and chairs are chiefly of Bentwood or Madeira wicker-work; the bedrooms all have iron beds, with clean white sheets, pillowcases and bedspreads, and look refreshingly nice. I remember this hotel as by far the very best that I have ever seen in the Colony, and it quite deserves all I have said about it. The meals are tasty, well prepared, and served to suit the fastidious European. The tariff, which is moderate, is printed and placed conspicuously in all the bedrooms, upon the English principles. The hotel has an imposing appearance, is large,

and the principal rooms are spacious, and all are lofty and clean; the native staff is well trained and attentive, and altogether the European leaves the house with a very favourable impression of what the Creole hotel proprietor is capable of doing when he sets his mind to work to please his white customers.

Waterloo is on very fertile soil; the place is covered with cocoa-nut trees and oil-palms; fruits and vegetables are in profusion. Bananas, pau-paus, oranges, mangoes, bread-fruit, cassada, and kolas, are in evidence; but fruit is not over cheap, as Freetown can take any quantity that can be sent in, either by train or by water-transport, and being only twenty miles out by a good road, many people do the distance on foot.

Waterloo is prettily laid out; there are good churches, and a pleasant quiet hangs over the place, but it does not represent the country any more than Freetown does, as there are few of the aborigines to be seen there.¹ The houses are numerous—several are as good as may be seen in Freetown, and the style and character of every-day life is just the same as in the metropolis. Petty trading is everywhere, but withal Waterloo proper is by no means an undesirable suburb to spend a few days in, after which, if time permits, I would recommend a short excursion by hammock over the mountains to the town of York, ten miles away on the coast line, which will make a change from the train and show the contrast between the two styles of overland travelling.

Beyond Waterloo the ground rises; we run on to Newton and then to Songo. Beyond Songo we pass through many swamps and clearings for cultivation, springing among which we see the graceful interlacing of the natural arches formed by the leaves of the young palms; and presently we arrive at the Ribbi river, not long ago so very formidable an obstacle to the traveller's progress.

¹ The population within the Waterloo District, which covers a considerable area and includes Hastings, York, Kent, and other important places, according to the last census of 1891, was 22,010; and there were 57 churches, comprising Episcopalian, Wesleyan, Lady Huntingdon, and the U.M.F.C.

The last time I crossed the Ribbi was on Governor Cardew's first expedition in 1894, when the railway was not even in contemplation. We were four hundred strong on that occasion, and our only means of crossing was by four small dug-out canoes. It took three hours before the whole column had reached the other side of the stream. We did not cross where the railway bridge is now placed but at the small town of Kibai, which was selected because the river was narrower there. We were unable to cross direct, but had to proceed up the stream for about fifteen minutes, landing on mud-banks on the opposite side at the town of Masanka.

On an earlier occasion the difficulties of transport were even greater, for I had then only one dug-out canoe, and that had not only lost its head but a piece out of its side, a very ordinary condition in which to find a dug-out in those days. I was, however, fortunate in having an empty trade gin-case as a seat, which prevented my getting wetter than necessary. Those who have travelled in this way will know that it requires some gymnastic skill to keep a good balance on a gin-case.

I landed, or rather left the dug-out, for a veritable Slough of Despond, and sat astride the shoulders of one of my faithful police, who assured me that he could manage the job; which he did, much to my surprise, for you never know what your man may tread upon.

As I recall these things, the wonder I feel at the present mode of transport is more than I can possibly express, for on coming to the Ribbi we now cross it by the longest bridge we have yet met, a bridge of nine spans and measuring 662 feet.

In the train we make this once formidable crossing in a few seconds; and had we had four hundred men with us it would have occupied no longer time.

This Ribbi has played an important part in days gone by when the people were troublesome, and when it had to be used by the Government steamer for the conveyance of troops on punitive expeditions. Very notably was this the case in the subjection of Robari by the late Sir Francis de Winton, who effected a landing at Mafengbe, whence he constructed a

military road, twelve miles long, to the gorge opposite Robari, where there was a large cotton tree known as "the Devil Tree."

The position of our troops was very favourable for firing on the town, but the natives displayed considerable confidence in their ability to defend their place, owing to their belief in their fetish, the gigantic devil tree; for as long as that tree stood where it did their town, they held, was impregnable.

They were, however, soon undeceived; for a young British officer applying a charge of gun-cotton to the tree, down it came at once; the fetish charm was broken, the town taken with little opposition, and promptly occupied by a detachment of the West India Regiment.

Subsequently it was at this town of Robari that I concluded a satisfactory peace between the Yonnis and the Timinis, whose wars had been giving every one a great deal of trouble.

The importance of such bridges as this one over the Ribbi we have just crossed is self-evident, especially in their moral influence on the up-country people, who are now quite aware that their formerly inaccessible strongholds can be reached in a few hours. But their eyes are also being rapidly opened to the benefits they are deriving from easy communication and from their own advancing civilisation.

After crossing the Ribbi we stop at Mabang station, on the very site of the quagmire upon which I landed from my gin-case canoe.

In about five-and-twenty minutes from Mabang on the Ribbi we are at Bradford—so named, not after the Yorkshire town, but after the first engineer for the construction of this railway.

Passing on through country that calls for no special remark we presently come to Rotifunk, the headquarters of the important American Mission of the United Brethren in Christ. Rotifunk is consecrated in the annals of Missions by the death of several devoted men and women who here were the victims of the terrible massacre that occurred during the native rising in 1898. From the railway we can see the fine stone church that has been erected as a Martyrs' Memorial. The details of

this pioneer Mission are too many and too important to be compressed into a few lines, but I hope to deal with them fully in another chapter.

Rotifunk is on the Bumpe River, now crossed by a short bridge. The river is narrow here and is unnavigable for trade canoes beyond Rotifunk ; but lower down this Bumpe widens out to its mouth and falls into Yawri Bay, which during the rains or the tornado times is a very dangerous stretch of sea to cross in a small boat, as I can testify from bitter experience. One night I was caught in a tornado in the Bay, and had it not been for the lightning we must all have been lost. As it was I was drenched to the skin, and had to sit in my soaked things, as they dried on me, for twenty-four hours, and when I reached my destination I had one of the worst doses of fever I have ever lived through. Two days with fair winds would be a satisfactory journey from the Bumpe to Freetown by boat ; but with adverse winds there is no saying how long it might take. Especially to be dreaded in the rainy season is the piece of broken water between the Carpenter Rock and the Cape Lighthouse, known as the Murphy, which is accountable for the loss of many lives.

I have ventured on this little digression to bring more vividly to notice the benefit of the railway. The contrast is not merely between comfort and the greatest discomfort, but between safety and danger to health, with serious risk even to life itself.

Beyond Rotifunk the line is cut through a dense growth of trees, showing a long vista apparently closed in by a great mountain right ahead. Presently, however, we are curving round the mountain's base, noticing a few oil-palms about, and in time arrive at the station of Boia, sixty-four miles from Freetown.

Beyond Boia we pass along valleys under low hills. Rice clearings are seen here and there ; vegetation is low and shrubby, and the country altogether uninteresting.

After a run of about eleven miles we reach Moyamba station, which is close by the Yambuta River. Moyamba is a town of some size and importance, as it is the residential

place of the District Commissioner, and was one of the centres of the West African Frontier Force until the concentration of that force at the fine new barracks at Daru, which we shall pass later on.

There are here Roman Catholic and American Missions, Schools, and Churches; also a small Government Hospital with medical officer and dispenser. It is also a recruiting ground for Court Messengers, about whom a word or two is necessary.

Attached to every district are a number of natives, mostly illiterate, belonging principally to the Mendi and Timini tribes, who are termed "Court Messengers." As their title implies, they have much to do with the District Commissioner's court; they serve summonses, act as bailiffs and as guards to the treasury, carry messages, and perform many other duties in connection with the court.

Their costume in the rains is of blue serge, and in the dry of khaki. When travelling they are armed with double-barrelled guns and buck cartridges. A station may have a considerable number, perhaps 35 or more, or the number may be less.

The paramount chief supplies the men, who are taken on as probationers for three months at 7d. a day inclusive. During the "hungry season" (that is, during the last three months of the rains) they receive 2d. a day extra; there is however no fixed time, it is within the discretion of the D. C.

If they prove suitable they are placed on the permanent strength, but they are still called probationers until the pay is increased. If at the end of three months the probationer shows himself to be a good man, the D. C. can increase his pay one penny a day; and if he is particularly smart it can be increased by 3d., bringing the day's pay up to 10d.; but no man can get a shilling a day until he can read and write English. The D. C. has everything in his hands in this matter after the man has been supplied by the chief.

If the man turns out well the paramount chief receives £1 a year for furnishing him; and in order to prevent any jealousy amongst the chiefs they are applied to in turn when men are required.

Each D. C. has one or two court messengers who have been

trained at the Bo Government School to act as schoolmasters for the teaching of the others.

After ten years they are entitled to a pension, which works out at something under £4 a year.

The head court messenger receives 8s. a day inclusive, and a certain percentage of messengers who have been promoted are paid up to 2s. 6d.

There is very little native produce for exportation at Moyamba, but there is still a certain amount of cash trading carried on by Sierra Leoneans; although with the removal of the barracks it will probably lose its importance, as it has already lost much of its trade.

Continuing, we approach quite near to a range of mountains going through deep railway cuttings. The country here is covered with great forest trees. Presently, by an iron bridge we cross the river Bangue, close to the native town of Tungi. Then again we are in straight cuttings affording long vistas that, although overhung with vegetation, allow distant views to be seen, which strike one who has been used to being hemmed in by bush as beautiful, being where they are.

And so to the little station of Kangahun, and in about another hour, through a region in which oil-palms are very scanty and now and then almost absent, to the larger station of Mano, set in a dense mass of low shrubs.

Here a great many people are walking about, and come on to the platform; there are also a number of natives moving up and down with calabashes on their heads containing freshly picked mangoes, the delicious taste of which is indeed welcome to such heated travellers as we are. Not dear either at four a penny! But should we prefer bananas, sixteen a penny is the not exorbitant price. Ginger-beer, made from the locally grown ginger, is also hawked about in bottles carried in calabashes. And here I saw for the first time pillows offered for sale; full-sized bed-pillows stuffed with country cotton, which the Sierra Leoneans call "wick." Sixpence the price—cheap enough too! The brilliant sunshine lights up the bright colours of the native costumes and makes a picturesque scene on this up-country platform.

On one side of the line we notice that many Sierra Leoneans have built their houses, while the other side has been allotted to the natives. The American United Brethren in Christ have another of their missions here.

By a bridge 589 feet in length we cross the Taia River, and soon find that the oil-palms are for a time more numerous. There are also many clearings for rice and cassada farms, and so we run on until we reach Tabe, near a river of the same name, where there is a long range of hills in the near background. One of the hills has an outline so remarkably resembling a Landseer lion in Trafalgar Square, that no Londoner can avoid noticing the likeness. Now although Sierra Leone means, of course, the Lion's Mountain, no one has been able to find any likeness to the King of Beasts on the mountains about Freetown itself, and the origin of the Peninsula's name, which has been the subject of any amount of discussion, remains uncertain. The hill I have just mentioned must be too far from the coast to have been noticed by early settlers; but the likeness must strike every European. In an hour from Tabe we arrive at the end of our day's journey—Bo.

CHAPTER XV

THE HALT AT BO

THE train goes no further than Bo in one day; so whether we visit it or not we have to stop there for at least a night, as the train will not start for the present Hinterland terminus at Baiima until seven o'clock next morning. It strikes me, however, very forcibly, that I shall find so many interesting things at Bo that I shall not want to leave by to-morrow's train, but shall prefer continuing the journey in a couple of days' time.

Here I am in a really large and important up-country station, and I alight on a broad, uncovered platform, on which I see that sight always so welcome both to the Europeans with an eye to business and to the British official with an eye to revenue—evidences of plenty of produce waiting to be taken down to the coast. I will have a good look at the produce later on when I have rested a little and have settled where I am to pass the night.

The station is quite unlike the one we left at Free-town—that was of the most rigid British type; but this up-country station is an adaptation of the tropical bungalow with deep verandahs, and a very good adaptation too. Built on stone pillars, the lower part is turned to account for offices and storage, the upper is the district traffic manager's residence.

Even as I pass it I can notice what facilities the basement affords for "bagging" palm-kernels and casking up palm-oil. It looks enticing, but it will have to wait awhile, although the shady ground floor seems beautifully cool and most conveniently leads directly on to the platform, and in spite, moreover, of the fact that the handling of produce

is always interesting to me, as it must be to every man who cares for West Africa.

I go out into the town. There is no hotel yet, but no doubt some of the European officials will gladly show me hospitality, as I am certainly not a perfect stranger, and out here hospitality is to be met with in most places. If I were a stranger, and a European welcome was not to be expected, I should have no hesitation in seeking shelter among the Sierra Leoneans or natives, who are always glad to turn an honest penny, and whose courtesy can always be depended upon. Of course travellers are supposed to have their own beds or hammocks with them, which, in the case of native hospitality, simplifies matters. A hammock, so long as it can be slung up in a manner that enables one to lie at full length, is by no means to be despised; I have frequently slept in one with the greatest comfort. On the other hand, if it bends up your unfortunate body to an acute angle, it is misery pure and simple—at best you can only doze; but if you have a light little “compactum” bed with you, you feel you are all right even in a native hut.

I am not disappointed; the hospitality which I expected is extended to me. I have an excellent dinner, a pleasant evening, a good night's rest, and on the whole am so comfortable that I decide not to go by next morning's train, but to sit on the verandah of the station and see it off, and then look about me generally.

When I get to the station at about 6.30 next morning, I find that passengers are arriving for two trains that start within a few minutes of each other—one on the return journey to Freetown, the other going up to Baiima, so there is plenty of activity all around.

Bo, which is the principal place upon the railway after leaving Freetown, is 136 miles from the capital of the Colony. The station is like all others of the kind, only on a larger scale. It stands on a clearing in the bush. From the verandah we look across the three lines of metal, and on to the open country running out from every point into a series of high hills covered by low shrub, forest trees being seen only here and

there, and oil-palms very rarely. The neighbourhood is evidently advancing in cultivation, as in some places hillsides have been recently cleared for rice and cassada.

It is a gorgeous morning; the sunshine brilliant and powerful enough to make me thankful for the shade of the verandah the traffic manager, Mr. Cullen, kindly allows me to occupy; but I must confess I am simply lost in amazement at the sight before me. Can it really be possible that two trains full of peaceable travellers should actually be starting from this remote place so near to scenes that only ten years ago had been the centres of the native rising, and of some of the most terrible massacres which then took place? We know, as a fact, that it is not only possible, but that the change is actually taking place before our eyes; yet it is difficult enough to realise.

Down below is every indication of advancing civilisation, the women traders returning to Freetown in their gay prints—mauve being the predominant colour—stiffer than ever, and much trimmed with frills and plenty of white lace about the shoulder, and Madras handkerchiefs everywhere. The oval japanned bonnet-box here, as at Freetown, is the favourite form of luggage. Then there is the progressing native lady, who does not yet aspire to the wearing of a made-up dress, and who contents herself at present with only copying at a respectful distance her up-to-date sister of the city of Freetown;—I say at present, because it cannot be supposed that it will be long before she will not only catch up to her, but may even surpass her.

One of these native ladies with a good figure and pleasant features arrests my attention, and I make a note of her costume. She has wound a length of dark cloth round her—by way of skirt; above it she wears a white embroidered bodice, cut low, and without sleeves—a fine contrast to her glossy dark brown skin. A choice silk handkerchief, bright blue, is round her head, silver bangles on her wrists, gold bob ear-rings, and a bead necklace complete her attire.

I must admit that she looks delightfully fresh, as indeed do all the people on the platform. The costumes of the men are

equally bright, especially those of the Mandingoes and Susus. The whole scene is full of colour and brilliant cleanliness, producing an effect entirely suited to the tropics, and charming there among its proper surroundings.

Breakfast is not forgotten even in the excitement of the anticipated journey. Young Sierra Leone girls, as nicely dressed as their elders and with plenty of silver bangles on their dusky wrists, and happy smiles on their faces, stand about holding country baskets of most tempting new rolls, or sell *agidi*—a favourite mixture of beaten maize and cus-cus seed wrapped up in leaves—most convenient for a long railway journey.

Nor are the native employés at Bo station forgotten by the country people. Just look at that little native girl—shall we say she is ten years old?—who has taken up her position on the platform just under us. A pretty little thing, with apparently a soft and delicate skin, and as scantily clothed as she well can be—a Madras handkerchief round her head, a necklet of blue beads hanging half-way down her body, and seven rows of black Jiggida beads around her slim waist over a strip of red and white cotton cloth—hanging down back and front, which has its own signification.

This enterprising child has in front of her a large tin bowl, from which she offers an early morning breakfast to such natives as may be inclined to patronise her. I take it her prices are strictly reasonable.

She is selling *abala*, an inviting, well-browned block compounded of rice, banana, and palm-oil. By the side of her bowl is an earthenware basin containing a condiment known as *pujeh*, a mixture of pepper and palm-oil forming a thick sauce. Now she has found a fresh customer; he takes up the three-pronged fork that when not at work lies on the pile of blocks, called in English “pancakes,” although they are as unlike our home-made variety as anything can be, and turns over the pile until he has found the largest—breaks it in two, holds it up to the little pickin, who with more smiles and a few kindly words takes a spoonful of the pepper sauce and sprinkles it into the opening. A halfpenny, “one copper,” changes hands, and the

recipient of the delicacy makes way for the next customer. This little lady is evidently doing a brisk trade—and no wonder, she serves in such a winning way I almost wish I could eat *abala* and *pujeh* myself.

The passengers begin to arrive quite an hour before the trains are due to start, but although there is much activity and many friends to see the travellers off, for here the penny platform ticket is not necessary, there is not the slightest confusion, and punctually to time the Freetown train is started under the personal superintendence of the traffic manager, and five minutes later, in the opposite direction, away steams the other train to the distant Hinterland terminus at Baiima.

We can now give some attention to the basement and its facilities for storage. Storage here right on the platform is a great advantage to the merchant, and the Government have been very considerate in this matter at all the large produce stations along the line. In the basement we find the cans of palm-oil waiting to be loaded up into railway trucks. The people have no means of bringing down large casks of oil; they have to put it into any receptacle they can find. Just now kerosene tins are more used than anything else. A tin will contain four gallons; two full tins make a good load for a native carrier and are easily packed into his long, palm-leaf hamper. When the hamper arrives at Bo the merchant can, if he likes, put his big butts on a truck on the railway siding, and prepare it for shipment at the port of Freetown by filling it with the contents of the kerosene tins; this can be done at the station, where every facility for the handling of large packages is given.

Palm-kernels too are brought down to the station in small quantities and are here made up into large bags for shipment. At present, however, there are no cranes and no lifting power of any kind, all must be done by manual labour; but the natives seem to have taken kindly to work of this sort.

A good deal of produce now reaches Bo by bullock-cart transport; the four-wheeled bullock-wagon, and the "Feeder-Road" by which it can easily travel, being another recent improvement devised by the Government.

I shall later have more to say about these "Feeder-Roads"—so called, I suppose, because they "feed" the railway; but I may now mention that there is one here known as the Bo-Mandu Road coming down to this station. It runs a distance of twelve miles through Dambara and then on to its terminus at Mandu, seventeen miles from Bo, passing of course many *fakais* or villages on its way. One of the bullock-wagons will carry a ton weight, and will stop where required to take up a load. This road journey occupies one day out and one day back. The modest charge for this convenience is a penny halfpenny per mile for a bag of palm-kernels, twelve of which make up a ton; and other stuff in proportion. This bullock-wagon is used entirely by the country people and the Sierra Leone traders.

Another good Government road runs into Bo from Tikonko, about nine miles off in the other direction; but no produce comes down to the railway from there; evidently it all goes to Mafweh by native carriers, and then by canoe along the Big Bum River to the coast at the Sherbro.

Water transport, when it can be obtained even at a considerable distance has been indisputably shown to be much cheaper than carriage by railway; consequently the branch factories of the European houses at the navigable head of the Big Bum at Sumbuya on this river, and at Pujehun or Mopalma on the Upper Kittam, will always continue to have the large trade they have been doing for many years past, as produce can be and has been carried to those places from at least sixty miles inland, from the navigable heads of those rivers.

Before leaving the station I should like to mount again to the verandah to have another look at the mountains. From the verandah we are looking due south. At night the Southern Cross shines right in front. The mountains, beginning at the south-east and working to the south-west, are Lou-get-yi (Let me go; leave me), Gai-in-giyeh (Blacksmith's head; so called because this mountain is stated to be full of ironstone, which was formerly worked), Seh Gumbu (Under the elephant's belly), and Manjeh-bo-bu (Under the neck).

It is strange to hear these native names and to learn their primitive meaning while looking out on to this clearing in the bush and seeing the machinery of an English railway system in perfect working order. As we leave the station a European merchant arrives and consults the traffic manager. He wants so many trucks—a truck holds eight tons—at such a time, at such a station down the line. The telegraph is installed throughout the system at English rates. They wire to the master of, say, one of the little stations that so much stuff is waiting there, send down the requisite number of trucks, and without loss of time the produce is at Freetown and on board the Liverpool steamer. Everything is done to get the stuff away quickly. I cannot help being surprised to see with what regularity the traffic is managed, and how quickly the natives are taking to the steam horse, the iron road, and the telegraphic wire. Of course it is all very recent as yet, and as we are leaving the station we meet a procession of bare native carriers with their backs bowed under their long hampers, just as I saw them in the gone-by days when I first set foot in West Africa. And after all there is a good deal to be said for that same hamper.

* It is unlikely that anything lighter or more admirably suited to overland transport in primitive times could have been devised than the palm-leaf hamper; which, no doubt, has always been the sole package for carrying about the country anything and everything that had to be conveyed from one place to another. It is quite remarkable what great weights a native will carry by means of one of these hampers. When he is doing it for himself or for his chief, he will carry as much as 100 lbs. for a considerable distance, or even half as much again for a short distance; but the regulation load for a man when employed for governmental overland transport is the more modest 50 lbs. The up-country Mendi invariably takes his load upon his back, whereas those in the lower parts or at Sierra Leone will carry their loads upon their heads; but in that case the loads will consist mostly of boxes and cases made up to the standard weight. I measured a hamper recently and found it to be 6 feet 4 inches long by 9½ inches

wide and 7 inches deep. It is most interesting to notice the way a hamper is made; two leaves from the Kere or potta-potta palm are obtained and trimmed to the required length by cutting off the top and the bottom ends of the mid-rib. They are then laid parallel to each other on the ground about eight inches apart, the leaflets between the mid-ribs being simply crossed together and tied top and bottom. The ends of the outer leaflets, together with the remaining lengths which protrude over the sides after being interlaced, are then taken and wound together in pairs, leaving four or five inches free from the stem, and always an end with which to join the remaining leaflets. This being done, a continuous rope-like edging is formed which composes the sides of the hamper. The weight of this hamper when finished is 3 lbs. 2 oz., or say 4 lbs. with the dried leaves for the lining and covering. This apparently frail thing is capable of being packed with billets of camwood, palm-kernels, cans of palm-oil, rice, salt, and cases of gin. Hard or soft stuff makes no difference; all goes into this most commodious package, which is then covered with leaves and laced across with tie-tie or light fibre rope. Its narrowness is valuable when the carrier's way is for long distances through forest tracks; and it will hold its own, I should say, for many a year to come, in spite of bullock-wagons and railways.

At the back of the railway station is a very fine compound. "Compound" is the regulation word, but if I were left to myself I should say it was more like a park carefully laid out with trees, through which run well-kept private roads. Looking on to this park are nine bungalows, several being of spacious dimensions, forming three sides of a very large quadrangle.

These were originally the residences and offices of the railway construction staff; but on the completion of the line they were taken over by the Colonial Government and are now official residences, and, I take it, very comfortable residences too. They are erected on stone or iron columns, with open trellis-work verandahs. Some of them even enjoy the extreme luxury of a water-supply laid on to them, but all have good

tanks for storing the rain from the corrugated iron roofs. I am told that the mention of such roofs is shocking to English taste; I can only reply that if those whom the word "corrugated" shocks lived out here they would know how to appreciate these strong waterproof house coverings—especially during the rains.

As a matter of course, where the British officials number more than one or two there will the tennis-court be; therefore I am not astonished to find that in the centre of this quadrangle there is a large grassy space admirably adapted for the national game. At present the trees that surround it are comparatively young, indeed the whole place was mere bush only a few years ago, but trees grow quickly here, and they will soon add to the park-like appearance of the place. Judiciously planted clumps of broad-leaved bananas, fine, decorative shrubs, are turned to account for obscuring the basements of the dwellings in which the domestic work is carried on.

The largest of these bungalows is occupied by the circuit judge and his wife, the cool basement in this case forming the court-house. Others are allotted to the District Commissioner, the Medical Officer, and other officials, the principal of the Bo school (of which school more anon), and last, but certainly not least, there is here the Bo school itself; the boys of which occupy what are termed "towns" beyond this compound. The whole forms a very compact group of Government buildings amidst very pleasing surroundings.

It is a charming settlement to come across 136 miles from the coast, and only nine miles from the scene of the massacres of 1898! So short a time ago these unspeakable horrors occurred, yet now up here there is an English lady living in apparently as great security as if at home in the old country.

This lady is Mrs. Arthur Hudson, the wife of the circuit judge, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Bo, and of whom I took a photograph out of doors, standing beside her little mule-cart. The mule is, of course, imported, but it seems to thrive up here. The roads are good enough and safe enough now for a European lady to use. Mrs. Hudson seemed very well, and complained of nothing except

the isolated life and the want of feminine society, which just then she was feeling acutely, for the medical officer, who had his wife with him, had recently been promoted to Northern Nigeria and had left; so the judge's wife had lost her companion. She was now the only European woman in the bungalows, added to which was of course the loneliness which she necessarily felt during the frequent absence of her husband when on circuit.¹ These were drawbacks; but the place was very convenient for many reasons; and if you wanted anything that was to be had at Freetown, you had only to wire for it and it arrived by the next train.

Bo is altogether, to my thinking, about as healthy as any locality in either the Colony or the Protectorate; that, no doubt, is one among many reasons why the Government have chosen it for the site of their school for the sons and nominees of chiefs. This is an entirely new departure, of such vital importance that the Bo school must have a chapter to itself.

¹ The Hon. Arthur Hudson, circuit judge, has since been appointed to the Gold Coast Colony as Attorney-General.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL AT BO

DURING our halt at Bo we shall be able to gain a pretty clear idea of this new Government undertaking, which like most fresh enterprises has called forth a good deal of discussion ; for here, up-country, the Education Question seems to be, if possible, even more complicated than at home.

The Bo school was only opened on the 1st of March 1906, so that it may be said to be still in the experimental stage, but it certainly looks like a step forward very distinctly in the right direction ; I speak, of course, only for myself.

The large bungalow used as the schoolhouse is in the Government compound looking on to the lawn, which is scored for tennis. The boys live in "towns" beyond the compound, composed of the ordinary round native huts. There are eight boys in each hut, under the charge of a big boy-monitor. Each house has a piece of ground attached to it, which the rules of the school compel the boys to cultivate and keep in good order. Part of this ground is used for growing vegetables, the rest laid out as a flower garden ; but the general aspect both of the boys and of their "towns" is distinctly native. No dressing up as Europeans is permitted. By the school regulations native teachers and their pupils must appear very much as they would in their own homes in the bush.

Only the sons or nominees of chiefs are admitted as pupils.

"The main object," says the Government notice of the place, "will be to train the sons of chiefs in such a manner as to make them good and useful rulers of the country in the future." They are to be taught "the ordinary branches of an English education, together with special and practical training in Farming, Carpentry, Bridge-building, Road-making, and

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Land-surveying. From the beginning of the Institution the pupils will be taught that Labour is as necessary a part of Education as a knowledge of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic."

Every one who knows anything about the training of natives understands the wisdom of teaching them what Bishop Ingham calls "the Gospel of the Carpenter's shop"; but this applies with special force to the sons of chiefs, whose fathers and forefathers have been used to regard manual labour as the work of slaves.

The ambition of an ordinary native youth with an English education is to get some kind of clerkship, in the Government service, if possible. This ambition is not encouraged at Bo; on the contrary, the notice states most unmistakably :—

"It is not the intention of the Government to employ any of the pupils after they shall have passed through the school. His Excellency desires very great emphasis to be laid on this point, and further desires it to be plainly stated to the chiefs."

I observe that the chiefs themselves are to be received with the greatest consideration when they visit their boys. Some British fathers who read this may even go so far as to wish they themselves were as well treated. Instructions are given that these fortunate parents are always to be made welcome; that two large guest-houses are to be set apart for their accommodation, and that the working of the school is to be willingly and carefully explained to them. Special care is to be taken in conversation with the paternal chiefs to point out that native customs and institutions will not be interfered with nor spoken against, excepting, of course, such customs as are repugnant to humanity. Great efforts are to be made, and as we have seen are being made, "to enable the boys to acquire a good education without loss of their natural attachment to their respective tribes. Tribal patriotism is to be strengthened; Mendi pupils, for instance, are to be taught in such a way that they will prefer Mendiland to any other country; so with Timinis, and all the other various tribes represented in the school."

Sad to relate, when a boy from the Hinterland who has been educated in Freetown returns to the home he left behind

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him he is almost invariably disgusted with it and leaves it with contempt on the earliest opportunity. Now this kind of thing is, it is hoped, to be nipped in the bud at Bo, or rather will not be allowed the chance of budding. To begin, the limited outfit the pupil brings with him hardly permits of his going much into other than native society. Here is his kit:—

1 Country gown.	1 Cap.
1 White gown.	1 Hammock (optional).
3 Kerchiefs.	1 Mat (country).

Their native food is as simple as their costume, consisting of rice, dried fish, palm-oil, and country pepper. Bananas are served out every morning, except the one day on which there is no market in the town. Every house is supplied with its own large basin for food, which is filled at the general cook-house at meal times, and placed on the ground of the verandah of each house. There the boys sit round it, using their fingers country fashion; all such things as knives, forks, and spoons being rigidly, and, as I venture to think, very properly taboo.

There were when I visited the school during my recent trip eighty boys in the ten houses. These boys were chiefly belonging to the Mendi, Timini, Sherbro, Lokko, and Konno tribes. In case the little fellows should be sick there are three nursing houses, and as a boy naturally likes to be nursed by a woman who can speak his own language, three nurses—a Mendi, a Konno, and a Timini—are engaged to look after these invalids; while for a serious case there is a general hospital attended by the Medical Officer of the district.

The pupils are also encouraged to bring with them their own musical instruments or games, and “in their sport are to be left entirely to themselves, so that their hours of play may be filled up in a natural and joyous fashion.”

The actual hours in school are not over long; in the morning they work from seven to ten, with a quarter of an hour's break for recreation, and from four to five in the afternoon, the native staff of teachers being instructed from two to four.

As there is a large farm attached to the school, experiments



THE GOVERNMENT SCHOOL AT BO

Only the sons or nominees of chiefs are admitted, the object being so to train them in a common-sense way that they may become useful rulers in the future.

FETISH FISH WATER AT KENNERMA

These fish are absolutely sacred, and should any person kill one of them it is believed that death would shortly ensue.

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will be made there by the pupils, so that they may find out for themselves the value of fertilisation, of a deeper turning over of the soil, and of more scientific methods of agriculture than at present obtain.

I will quote Article 7 of the Government notice verbatim :—

7. "There will be no interference with the religious beliefs of the pupils. Sound ethical teaching will be given, and every effort will be made to train them in morals. Thus ; (a) Habit : what it is ; how it is acquired ; good and bad habits ; how to cultivate the former and to check the latter. (b) Truthfulness ; necessity and importance of it ; truthful and untruthful people ; truth in word and deed ; slander ; idle gossip. (c) Work : necessity of it ; workers and drones ; thoroughness and honesty in work ; mental and physical work. (d) Self-control : courtesy : good manners : care of the body : care of the mind."

The boys are especially taught to honour and respect their parents as well as all the aged and those in authority in the towns of their country.

Article 10 must also be given verbatim, for a reason that would hardly strike the European mind :—

10. "His Excellency desires that special attention should be given to lessons on the lives of good and great and notable women. By means of lantern lectures in the barri pictures of the principal incidents in the lives of such women as Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, the late Queen Victoria, and many others, will be shown and explained to the pupils, with a view to increasing their respect for women."

It would hardly occur to the average European that anything very dreadful lurked in this paragraph ; but scarcely was the Government notice published when a petition against Paragraph 10 was sent in to the Governor. I will quote a part of it, as it sets forth very clearly the Mohammedan ideal on the subject to which it refers :—

"In paragraph 10 the rev. gentleman (the Rev. J. Proudfoot, Principal of the Bo School) speaks of introducing pictures in connection with the names of such eminent Englishwomen as Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Fry, and Queen Victoria, to increase the 'respect of the natives for women.' Now it is

respectfully submitted that Mohammedans object to all this, in the first place, because they have notable women of their own known to every Moslem. According to a traditional saying of Mohammed, Khadya, Fatimah, the Virgin Mary, and Asiyah, an African woman, the wife of Pharaoh, were the four perfect women. These, and others in Soudanese history not generally known, are the models which the Mohammedan has always before him. The names mentioned by Mr. Proudfoot, noble and excellent as they are, will not appeal to the Mohammedan, but rather divert him from imitable models to unattainable ideals.

"Secondly, the Mohammedans, following the teachings of the Koran, regard the introduction of pictures into their schools or books as an abomination.

"The African Mohammedans are perfectly strict on this point, and to attempt to interfere with this 'religious belief' by any method whatsoever would be an infraction of the policy of the Government as laid down by Mr. Proudfoot himself and everywhere pursued by His Majesty's Government."

There was a great deal of opposition at first, which, however, was quickly overcome by the creation by His Excellency of a Mohammedan Advisory Board. It was, moreover, soon discovered that much of the opposition was not due to the consensus of opinion among the Mohammedan community generally, but was rather the expression of the personal views of a leading advocate of Moslemism, who however no longer occupies the position he then held.

During my quite recent Hinterland tour the Principal very kindly took me over the schools, where I saw many of the children at their lessons in lofty, well-ventilated rooms. The blackboard played a prominent part. In the class-room I first entered were sixteen Timini boys of ages varying from eight to fourteen. They read from English primers without mistakes, and answered the questions upon the illustrated subjects in their books with an intelligence that surprised me, until I was told that the system of the school allows only conversational teaching without any books for the first two years. This is to enable the pupils to acquire a fair vocabulary of English words,

the meaning of every one used being by that time fully understood by them. So when they do begin to read from books they do it with intelligent interest, instead of committing words and phrases to memory without having much idea of their meaning.

In the next class-room thirteen smaller Timinis were writing exercises on slates in a well-formed round hand.

I then went to another large room, where one of the assistant masters, Mr. John Pool, was holding a chemical class with practical experiments. Thirty boys from the Mendi and Konno tribes were attending this class, and it was really quite remarkable to hear their intelligent answers to the questions of the lecturer. I was amazed at the extraordinary interest the whole of the boys showed in the lesson and in the experiments. But, indeed, the interest manifested in all the classes strongly impressed me; and when I remembered that these little fellows are the first who have ever received instruction under European supervision in this remote part of the Colony, and noticed their eagerness to learn and to understand, not by mere rote but by reasoning, I could not but feel convinced that we may anticipate a wonderful transformation in the country when these boys become in their turn paramount chiefs. The desire for knowledge has evidently taken root in most fruitful soil. The pupils seem to have more than the ordinary aptitude for receiving information. They are not permitted to learn anything in a parrot-like fashion; no time is spared to convince them that so and so is the case, and in bringing the reasoning of the thing home to their minds; and once being really there it is retained in their memories.

If I may judge from what has been accomplished in the short time the Bo school has been at work, it is impossible not to anticipate a progress beyond the most sanguine expectations, when these lads are in future days called to positions of importance in so many different parts of the Protectorate, among so many various tribes. To them will no doubt be due, before very long, a gradual disappearance of many of the fetish beliefs and customs that at present weigh like a nightmare on the native mind, oppressing it with a vague but ever-

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present terror of influences from which they feel no escape is possible.

Boys who are drilled in the habit of connecting any given effect with some adequate cause will acquire, it is to be hoped, sufficient mental vigour to shake themselves free in after life from the slavery of unreasonable superstitions. As I left the Bo school I could not help feeling assured that here a great work was being carried on, and that the kind of tuition given was admirably adapted to awaken the intelligence of these really sharp-witted little fellows.

The terms appear, in contrast to those at home, strictly moderate, £10 per annum for schooling, board, and lodging can hardly be called excessive; but in the Government notice there is the suggestion that "as the education of these pupils to make them good rulers is a matter affecting the welfare of the various chiefdoms, the fees may properly be contributed by the whole chiefdom."

One object in placing the school in the Protectorate is, that the boys may be kept in touch with their people. There are holidays, of course, and once every year the boys can spend some weeks at home.

Here, I fancy, some English youngster may ask under his voice—"What about tips, pocket-money, and tuck-shop?"

Ah! There you have me! As for the tuck-shop, it appeared to me—as a "pater"—beautifully absent. Should, however, a chief when he visits his boy prove to be "not such a bad sort," there is a native town within walking distance along a good Government road, and outside that town, under shady trees, there is a native market of all kinds of things, many of them very tempting to the native boy, who doubtless will know how to begin the education of a "pater" on lines that "pater" may possibly consider somewhat too modern.

The present paramount chief of Bo is a fine, well-grown, young Mendi named Bimba, who speaks good English, and is altogether a most intelligent man. This is not surprising, for, as he informed me, he had been nearly four years in the British navy—for two years of which time he had been engaged

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in the naval store at the Island of Ascension. His predecessors had been dead only a short time, and Bimba had been provisionally appointed by the Government upon probation. He is the son of Hotagua, who was chief in Governor Rowe's time. Chiefs Bungreh and Bojam, however, came between Bimba and his late father.

Bo is a large and straggling town. The trade is principally in cash, and is of a retail description. There is not much produce—but little, in fact, compared with other parts of the country; there is, however, a large sale of imported goods done by the numerous Sierra Leone traders. These traders are supposed to pay a small yearly rent to the chief for “sitting down,” but it does not seem to be rigidly enforced.

In the market under the beautiful tropical trees there are, besides imported things, many country-made articles for domestic use; and I noticed that quite as good order and as great a keenness for business prevailed here as at the metropolis of Freetown.

Here is a list of the articles I observed to be most in demand:—

Cassada, liquid palm-oil for cooking, country-made ginger-beer, which must have been introduced from Freetown, country spice, bird's-eye pepper, jakatus, pine-apples, bananas, kola nuts, agu or melon seed, cassada starch balls, country black soap, long-tissued country-grown cotton, country bread made from ground nuts and rice, country pancakes (a combination of rice, bananas, and palm-oil), country cocoas, resembling potatoes, bitter leaves, and a large display of small dried fish called Nineh, brought up for trade from the lower Kittam, together with other sorts of fish from the Mabesse Lake, a large inland water ten miles from the Kase Lake in Sherbro.

Since my return I have heard that a branch of the Bank of British West Africa has been opened at Bo, which in itself will do much to assist trade and to facilitate the Treasury work of the Government; for without a bank the transport of money is attended by a considerable amount of risk, and consequently of much anxiety to the officials responsible for its safety.

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On the whole, Bo is to me a delightful place. I cannot think it can be unhealthy in the African acceptation of the term; provided that the resident has plenty of occupation, and especially work of a kind that must be done.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM BO TO BAIIMA

IF I have a weakness, as is possible, it is for relating events precisely as they occurred. I do not say that certain lines by an ever-popular British poet were suggested by this idiosyncrasy of mine, but certainly they have more than once been applied to me by my intimate and non-official friends. I allude, need I add, to the well-known chorus in the "Mikado":—

"His taste exact for faultless fact
Amounts to a disease."

It was this scrupulous determination to describe the Bo school as I actually saw it on my late tour when I was alone that made me omit from the last chapter all mention of a fellow-traveller who had accompanied me from Freetown to Bo.

But it is now high time to look him up; not a difficult task, as he and I have passed the night in the same bungalow, and have shared the same kindly hospitality. Well, I look him up; he tells me he is now as fit as a fiddle, thanks to a couple of peaceful nights, comparatively free from the visits of mosquitoes, and to the fresher air that is already telling favourably upon him. He admits, however, that when he left the coast he was as limp as a rag, and that his gaze had been for some time past too often directed with a peculiar kind of longing towards the homeward-bound steamers. He has also met up here an old friend in such improved health and spirits that at first sight he hardly knew him. There is an excellent breakfast arranged for us in the verandah, and after doing full justice to it we go once more to Bo station, accompanied by

our host, and as many Europeans as can be spared from their duties.

Again there are two trains waiting; again the crowd of many-hued passengers, the same order, the same activity, and the same punctuality.

We have secured a couple of cane-bottomed lounge-chairs, said good-bye to our friends, and off we start for the eighty-four mile run to Baiima, at present the Hinterland terminus.

We are soon going through the mountainous country we looked at from the verandah of Bo station, across many small streams safely bridged for us, through to Gerihun—on again to Baoma, then by one of the finest of the iron bridges on this line over the broad Sehwa River.

The Sehwa is too important a water-way to pass without notice, but its width up here is nothing when compared with its width for its first fifty miles from the sea, where it is known as the Big Bum, and is navigable for trade craft right up to the falls of Mafweh. Down below it is one of the most important trading waters of the Sherbro, too much given perhaps to change of names; for near the coast, divided from the sea only by the narrow sand-spit of Turner's Peninsula, which there forms its left bank, it is called the Bum-Kittam. Up here it is the Sehwa River.

For some time before reaching Bo the oil-palms were very scanty, indeed almost absent. Beyond the Sehwa they are again plentiful. Here we begin to notice cattle grazing in the fields beside the track; they are in fine condition, that we also notice. There is a certain freshness in the sight of them, for Freetown and its neighbourhood are not cattle-producing places, but are dependent for their supply upon importations, so we are unused to see cattle feeding peaceably in meadows.

Formerly, before the Anglo-French boundary delimitations, the road into the very far interior, where cattle thrive, being open to the Colony of Sierra Leone, great quantities of beasts were regularly brought down to the coast,—sufficient indeed not only to supply Freetown, but for exportation to the Gold Coast.

The delimitation shut up those roads against our Colony,



INDIGENOUS OIL PALMS.

Showing the method of germinating, the nut or seed still adhering to the infant growth. With the bearing palms, illimitable quantities of young ones in every stage and size are to be met with.

Photographed at Gorn in the Mando country, Upper Mendi.



THE OLD BLOCK HOUSE AT BANDAJUMA

Long since done away with.

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and the cattle trade was consequently diverted from Sierra Leone to the French port of Konakri, which for a time was a serious inconvenience and loss to us.

But now the railway is coming to the rescue, and is bringing down cattle from the distant parts of our own Protectorate as well as from beyond us in Liberia on the north-east side. The animals naturally reach Freetown in better condition than they used to do after their long and exhausting journey; the railway among other benefits has thus opened up a new cattle trade, and consequently meat at Freetown and all along the line is now cheaper and more easily to be obtained than it was some time ago.

Now just to show what may be had up here I must tell you that on my last tour, which was my first experience of the new régime, I travelled along this line by special permission, and as the guest of the Acting General Manager. Lunch was served in his private coach, which of course we occupied while on the journey. Here is the menu:—

Soup, grilled chicken, baked potatoes, canned peaches, cheese, bananas, pine-apples, and excellent coffee with “tinned” milk, no longer a luxury as once was the case; supplemented by whisky and Johannis Water, or bottled beer for those who cared to take it.

This was very different from being dependent upon dry biscuits, with possibly a country egg of questionable freshness, and a draught of cold tea; yet many a time have I been thankful to get even such meagre fare as that.

But now we are leaving the mountains and the cattle and are running into a town that looks as if it were a very active trading place, and of course we don't pretend to disguise from ourselves or from each other our interest in trade,—we all say “trade” out here—we don't even soften the word to “commerce.” We are now 169 miles from Freetown at Blama.

There is plenty of stuff and plenty of people on the platform; for Blama is one of the most important stations for produce and general trading on the line. Here we meet several European traders, all in the best possible health. In their Panama hats, their white flannels with sleeves rolled up to the elbow, showing

their well-tanned arms, they look as if they had come out to work ; and they move about, full of life and energy, in a way that is a pleasure to see, so great a contrast it offers to the languor of the European down on the coast, shut up in a factory surrounded by mangrove swamps. They have an athletic appearance it does one good to see ; their bicycles are standing about waiting for them ; they seem to be taking a real interest in the country and its rapid developments, and to be possessed by aspirations above the passing of their lives in an unwholesome office as mere clerical machines. Up-country life is making men of them, and is giving scope for their commercial abilities.

Blama is in the centre of the oil-palm belt ; that explains a great deal. It is extraordinary what enthusiasm this wonderful tree and its products can arouse in the minds of men both in Europe and out in West Africa. I have known men talk palm-oil and palm-kernels solidly for a whole long evening, and then seem as if they had only touched the fringe of their subject. An outsider cannot imagine what a man, conscious of the value of the tree which may be said to be the Ruler of West Africa, feels, when he realises that thousands, even millions of oil-palms—forests of oil-palms—are standing year in year out untouched by any human hand—turned to no account whatever ; I say, when he knows that all this vast store of indigenous wealth is standing idle, and knows also the human poverty it might relieve if it were only within the trader's reach—he wants to construct railways and feeder-roads everywhere, so that the native may be able to get the oil and the kernels, now going to waste, easily down to the coast, where the steamers are waiting for it to carry it to Europe, where the manufacturers are crying out for it.

Think of it !—These noble trees have from time immemorial, ever since West Africa has been fit to be their congenial habitat, been producing two and three crops of nuts a year ! Whether men come and gather their fruit or not makes no difference ; they go on producing it all the same. It may be that they perceive there are other creatures to be supplied from their richness besides human beings, and so go on contentedly, knowing their labour is not in vain, that they are fulfilling

their appointed task in the great scheme of things—perhaps giving back their oil to Mother Earth, that she may in her marvellous laboratory underground turn it into fuel for the ages to come! Perhaps—well, I had better pull up, this is a subject as inexhaustible as the wealth that, to my merely finite human intelligence, appears to be wasting in the depths of the great forests of the as yet hardly touched oil-palm belt.

Excuse this outburst; perhaps if you knew as much about these things as I do you might have even more to say about them.

Well, I am very glad to see that Blama is flourishing. It is within the chieftdom of Bo; there are no British officials resident there, although the place is visited by the District Commissioner on his patrols.

As we steam out of the station I recall the fact that on my recent tour I was very kindly entertained here by the agent of a British firm. My bedroom was large and comfortable, fitted with that great luxury—a long bath. Two large squares of carpet covered the dried mud floor, and I slept well on a camp bed with a mosquito net. The room was opened to the thatch, and on the whitened walls were sundry coloured prints, many of them contributed by an enterprising whisky firm, while hanging from the centre rafter was a small meat safe containing food, and beside it the half of a juicy-looking uncooked ham, handy for the cut-and-come-again process. These tempting delicacies need the eye of the master or they dwindle and disappear, so he keeps them in his own private apartments.

To show that even in Blama life is not quite all palm-oil and kernels, my friend had imported a gramophone. As he suspected I had not heard any music—other than that of the tom-tom or *segurah*—for some time, he felt I must be starving for some; so he treated me to “The Lily of Kildare” as rendered by Mr. John Harrison, “To be or not to be” spoken by Beerbohm Tree as Hamlet, “I’ll sing thee songs of Araby” sung by Edward Lloyd, followed by “While shepherds watch their flocks by night,” as given by the choir of St. Paul’s

Cathedral, and to several other records. Being a man of good taste he had an excellent selection, and I felt all the better for the kindly thought that had given me the music even before our repast.

Now, although this thriving town of Blama is in the midst of an untold wealth of oil-palms, it would all be unworked without overland transport; so it is here we begin to realise somewhat of the value of Government feeder-roads.

It is, of course, impossible to take a network of branch railways all over the country in next to no time, devoutly as we might wish it. Feeder-roads have been made, and are still being made, to tap the outlying places, and to bring them into touch with the nearest station.

The feeder-road that runs into Blama terminates at present twenty-four miles away, at Boadjibo, a town surrounded by a dense belt of oil-palms. On this road are other towns—for instance, Palima, on the Bundoria water, seventeen miles from Blama; also Koronko, ten miles on the north side of the line. The Sehwa River that we passed a little while ago by a fine railway bridge is crossed by another bridge fit for railway use, which will possibly be so used at some future day.

This feeder is a fine, hard, well-built road; a Government road twenty feet wide, cut through the bush and planted on both sides with shade trees, already very acceptable, but which in a few years will form a long, cool avenue.

On both sides of this road are good stores kept by Sierra Leoneans; but there is an absence of that extremely petty trading, where you see only a few pieces of print and a few galvanised buckets, iron pots, and bags of salt, that in some places is ever before you, reminding you of the trade of the Kissy Road.

Before the Government highway was made the business centre was on the outskirts of the native town to the south of the station; but with the opening of the feeder-road, the larger firms removed to and took up their position beside it, to the north of the station.

One enterprising firm at Blama has introduced two fine mules from Grand Canary, and an American four-wheeled

wagon. These, I am informed, are giving great satisfaction, and travel faster than the bullock-carts, but still—

“Not good enough!” ejaculated my companion. “Traction, traction of some sort will have to come before long! And why not?” he added reflectively. “Believe me, where the ubiquitous bike is spinning, there the maddening motor will hoot before long.¹ Now on my last leave I saw——”

We yarn freely, the fresh air here affecting both our tongues and our spirits, until we run into Serabu, a small station, but apparently with a growing trade. My friend says he will take an even bet that there are two or three hundred bags of kernels piled up on the platform awaiting the down train of the following day.

He has a keen eye for measuring produce, I am beginning to find out; no doubt he is right.

The sight of such a quantity on a little out-of-the-way platform excites him.

On we go again through deep cuttings, with here and there small trading places in the openings.

Then out into swampy ground, where a good deal of rice cultivation is going on. Many of these rice farms are simply clearings among the oil-palms. The young rice is, we reckon, about twenty inches high just now, and its pale green tone makes a pleasant variety in the deeper verdure of the trees.

We yarn about West African rice. He says, “Can’t get my people at home to take to it! Object to colour!”

I say, “Well, they may; but that is not my experience. I have for years sent it home, and my own family prefer it to all other rice; there is more flavour and nutriment about it. I am going to take a bag back with me, and for myself I can always make a meal off it plain boiled. If I can get a little sugar with it, well and good; if not, it suits me right enough. I like the best of everything when I can get it, but when I can’t I am satisfied with anything—cassada or bananas make a very good shift.”

The next halt is at Bai, a small “flag-station,” at which

¹ Since then the Government has put traction power on this road.

the train is only stopped by signal at present. This little place stands right in the midst of an oil-palm forest, so is bound to grow.

"Great Scot! A whole truck of kernels!" exclaims my companion. "Strikes me to-morrow's train is going to take down a pretty load of stuff!"

Beyond Bai our line is cut through the Kennema Pass between two lofty mountains of the Kamboi Range; a difficult piece of engineering well carried out. The mountains are densely wooded, with a profusion of oil-palms reaching down to the very line itself.

"Inspiring!" we both exclaim.

From the pass we run into Kennema, where I stopped some time ago, so will describe it while we wait at the station.

The station is spacious and well kept, with a broad, gravelled platform. We can set our watches here, as time is transmitted daily from Bo to this, and indeed to all other stations on the line.

About half a mile from the station is the Government compound surrounded by well-timbered land and shady glades, a park in fact. In the compound are the District Commissioner's offices, the post-office, and a fine prison and jail-yard.

There are thirty extremely well-built houses, circular and detached, in straight streets. The cooking-places are about forty yards from the houses, a wise precaution against fire. There are also a good many other houses dotted about in which native officials reside. New quarters were, when I stopped there, being built, and have since been completed, for the District Commissioner, upon an extremely fine elevated position. Kennema should now be a model station, where both Europeans and natives should be extremely comfortable. The water, I am assured, is excellent. It is a picturesque cantonment, nestling in a clearing amidst fine tropical vegetation at the base of the Kamboi Hills.

The Chief, Sumaila by name, is an intelligent elderly man, who speaks three languages—English, Timini, and Mendi. In the absence of the District Commissioner, Dr. Maxwell, who was then on patrol, I was kindly shown about the town by the

native Assistant Commissioner, Mr. J. Songo Davies, accompanied by Chief Sumaila, and among other places of interest we visited a lovely stream, in a bend of which, overhung by trees, was a pool of crystal clearness, regarded with great reverence by all the inhabitants of Kennema, because in it are always to be found a few fish of the size of trout—fetish fish.

They are regarded as absolutely sacred, and it is believed that should any person kill and eat one of them he would certainly die before long in consequence. No one must go to the pool without taking a little cooked rice for these fish.

In the town there is an old man who regularly goes down to the stream and talks to the fish in Mendi, asking for news and inquiring if anything is likely to happen to any one; and then after a short colloquy takes his departure.

These fish are of a dark colour, but there is one who lives quite apart in voluntary isolation, of larger size and of a grey hue—called the White Fish. This creature is considered to possess even greater sacredness than the others, with whom he never appears to fraternise. It is only now and then that he shows himself, and then always in a part of the pool a few feet away from the dark fish. It is said that the White Fish will never allow itself to be seen if there is any one looking on whose presence is not agreeable to it.

Fortunately, when I was taken to this pool the White Fish was evidently in a very good humour, as it not only showed itself distinctly but remained for some time in view, accepting graciously the dainty morsels which the numerous natives who accompanied us lavished upon it, in their delight at the condescension of their sacred pet.

The morning was glorious; the fact that all the fish appeared, devouring the food with avidity and remaining long in sight, was regarded as a happy augury by all our dusky friends present, and when they left with me they showed unmistakable signs of the keenest satisfaction. If at any time a fish is found dead on the water it is believed that some one in the town of Kennema will die.

The dead fish is not removed, but left floating on the surface of the pool, and a white “saraka” in the form of a

piece of cloth tied like a flag on a long, thin pole is erected by the side of the pool. At the time of my visit such a saraka was flying.

There is no doubt the people of Kennema have a very implicit belief in the occult powers of their fetish fish.

But I must not leave Kennema without a word about Mr. J. Songo Davies, the only native Assistant Commissioner in the Protectorate. Mr. Davies has been in the Government service for a long while, and worked under me for a great many years. It is therefore a very great pleasure to know that the admirable way in which he has always performed his duties has been recognised by the Government. He certainly merits the distinction he has gained.

He is a most intelligent man, speaking and writing excellent English; he has a thorough knowledge of native customs, and has acquired a great command of the Mendi language, which he speaks with remarkable fluency. The pure Mendi of the Upper Country is widely different from the patois of some of the lower places; it is singularly soft and expressive when spoken by such an orator as Mr. J. Songo Davies.

CHAPTER XVIII

STILL IN THE OIL-BELT

FROM Kennema we continue still in the oil-belt until we pull up at another important trading-place, Hangha, also at the base of the Kamboi Mountains.

Here there are several European branch establishments doing a large trade; also a great many small stores belonging to Sierra Leoneans. Palm-kernels are brought in along the feeder-road from considerable distances.

While waiting at the station we notice men drawing things that distinctly suggest the familiar water-butt combined with the equally familiar garden-roller. We have both of us heard of these curious arrangements, but it is the first time we have seen them at work. These are the revolving steel casks with an iron handle the Government has recently and tentatively introduced for work on their feeder-roads. They are supplied in two sizes, the larger for taking 700 lbs., the smaller 300, and are hired to the public at a rate of four shillings and two and sixpence respectively for one trip. The larger takes four men to draw it, the smaller two.

We are told that these casks are all very well for the transport of palm-kernels, but do not find favour for anything else; as the incessant rolling would injure any other article except cement. Besides this, the Mendi man does not understand pulling, he only understands carrying loads on his back in his palm-leaf hamper, and of course, like the rest of us, he does not take kindly to methods of work he is not used to.

The native's objection to pushing or drawing, instead of carrying on the head or back, is well exemplified by a couple of anecdotes that were very kindly told to me by that most

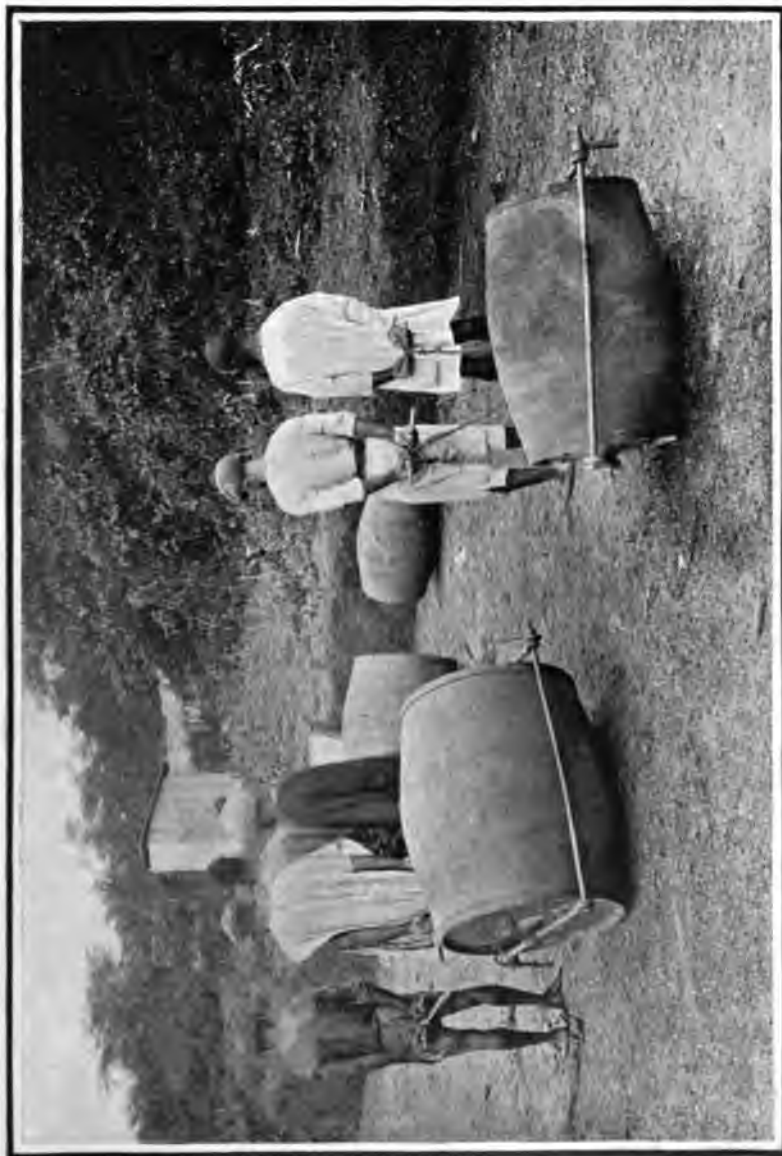
courteous and able Director of the Public Works Department at Sierra Leone, Mr. C. A. Copland, whose society is always a pleasure to those who have the privilege of obtaining it.

When in the year 1900 he was engaged, amongst his other improvements in the Protectorate, in the making of a good road between the town of Pujehun on the Upper Kittam River and the important town of Bandajuma on the Wanjeh, then the seat of government for the district under that name, and the district headquarters of the West African Frontier Force, in order to measure distances accurately he used a perambulating wheel, which was to be trundled along by a native labourer, the Director himself travelling by hammock. This hammock was always halted when coming up to a stream, which in the dry season would frequently be fordable for the bearers. So long as the wheelman was kept in sight, he performed his duty satisfactorily, trundling his wheel in the orthodox fashion, but when lost to view by the windings of the roadway, which often resembled the convolution of a snake, he evidently did not do so, as upon looking round upon one occasion Mr. Copland discovered the man carrying the wheel on his head; finding it, no doubt, easier so to carry it than to push it along the road. That particular section, so far as the precise measurement was concerned, had consequently to be computed at the usual rate of travelling.

The other instance was in 1904, when some ordinary navy work was being done. Some of the wheel-barrows which had been taken over from the Railway Construction by the Public Works Department were given out to the men to facilitate their work, and, as it was thought, make it easier for the men themselves; however, when not being watched after the barrows were loaded, it was discovered that two of the men would lift the barrow on to the head of another man, who would walk off with the load quite easily—although of very considerable weight, as may be imagined—rather than wheel it along.

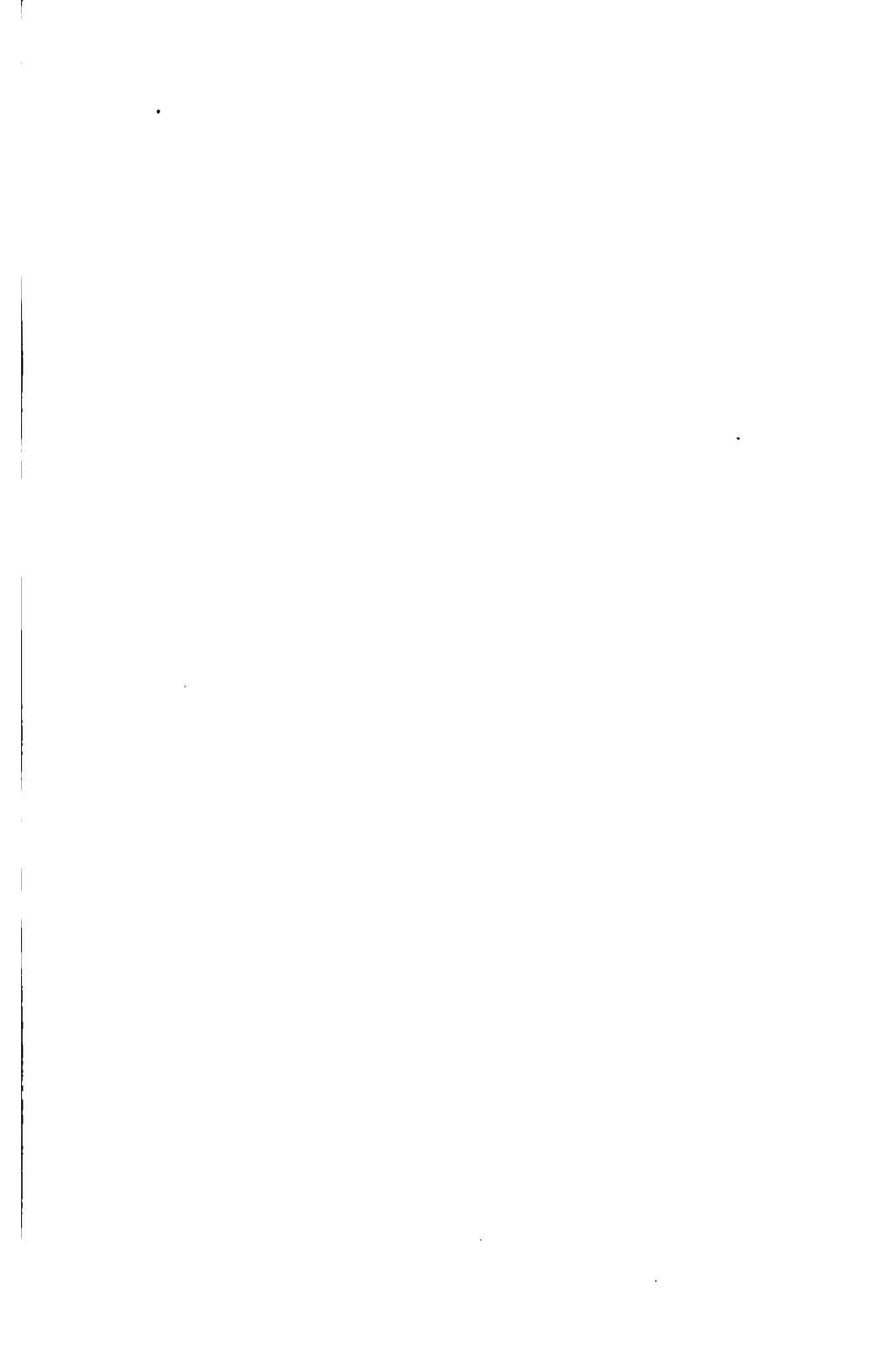
The feeder-road runs for about ten miles to Lago, another of those up-country places that before long will be much more important than they are now.

Leaving Hangha, we continue to wind among the densely



OVERLAND TRANSPORT

These are steel casks designed for work on the feeder roads. They have not, however, been found useful for the transport of anything except cement and palm kernels, as the revolving motion damages any other kind of goods. Besides this, the Mendi objects to transporting produce, etc., otherwise than on his back or head.



wooded mountains of the Kamboi range, pass another flag station, and shortly after run into Pottahun, the highest point on the railway. Then on again to Kormendi and, a few minutes later, cross the Male River, and so to Segbwema, where there are Government roads running twenty-eight miles north towards Falaba.

From Segbwema we go on to the bridge over the Moa River, where we stop, before crossing, at the station of the cantonment of the West African Force near Daru.

As I have been in Daru on more than one occasion I describe it here.

The location of the barracks is called in the Mendi language *Jeh-Luahun*, signifying between two waters.

Daru is $213\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Freetown, and before the railway came so far it was absolutely unknown there. I knew it myself because as Travelling Commissioner I had visited it when I was the only white man known in the country. It was then quite in its primitive condition.

This spring I arrived at Daru after several days' hammock travelling through the bush, and in approaching struck a broad roadway leading to a beautiful railway-station, on a clearing surrounded by many large cotton trees and other fine timber.

Now this happened to be the first time I had struck the railway at all; so imagine my surprise when I found that piece of road taken up by the houses and stores of Sierra Leone and Mohammedan traders—to me an entirely fresh sight to meet in the remote Hinterland. I had left my hammock, and for a few moments I stood wondering whether I had been suddenly spirited back to the Kissy Road or Kru Town and their petty traders.

There it was all in full force! There the well-remembered trellis-work hung over with the same cloth, prints, and Madras handkerchiefs. In front of the open store perhaps a couple of barrels with a board across for small fancy articles, the ground being covered with bags of salt, three-legged iron pots, green cases of gin, and demi-johns of rum; in fact, just the Kissy Road over again.

I passed the night in the town, the chief providing me with a house. It was new, and standing in a great new quadrangle among other new houses, all well covered with bamboo thatching and all having wide verandahs. On the ground of one of the dwellings a grey pony was stabled. As this was the only horse I had ever met up there, it was an object of interest. It was about thirteen hands high and seemed in good condition, except for its weak albino eyes. It wore a red head-cloth crossed in three bands over the forehead and face.

As I have said, it was the first horse I had met up here, although there are plenty to be seen at the back of Liberia about the Pandeme district. They might easily be brought overland if there were such a demand for them as to make the price profitable, but the Mendis are not an equestrian race, and have never been accustomed to horses; moreover, nearer the coast horses will not live at all. Occasionally in former times, when war was rife, a solitary horse fell into the war-boys' hands, as I have seen myself; but even such a prisoner was rare, and must have had an uncomfortable but probably short life after such a misfortune.

This large new town does not, however, constitute the native quarter proper; that adjoins the chief's settlement.

The following morning I set out to visit the new headquarters then in course of erection for the West African Frontier Force, on a magnificent site on the further side of the Moa River. I went by hammock along the railway line and over the very long and beautifully built railway bridge to the new cantonment, which was rising amidst mountains covered with forests of gigantic trees. I was told the situation was reported to be healthy. No traders are allowed on the barrack side of the Moa.

I recrossed the bridge to Daru, had breakfast, and was about to start for Baiima; but while I was debating whether my hammock men should follow the line or go across country, as I was told that the inland roads had been neglected since the railway had been built, a great lady arrived and wished to see me. Fortunately I had not to catch a train.

This lady was no less a personage than Mammy, or perhaps



CELEBRATED NATIVE CHIEFS
The late Momo Ja and the late Momo Kai-Kai of Pujehun and Bandajuma, Kittam.

1950

I should say "Madam" Mambaiyeh, the principal widow of the late distinguished Chief Mendingra, who had come from her town about two miles away on hearing of my arrival. She was very anxious, she said, that I should go on to see her own town, as the last time we had met she was at Juru, a considerable distance away, and then the principal town in the Gaura country.

Madam Mambaiyeh was an elderly lady, but was walking with some of her people. We started and in about an hour reached her town of Benduma; for the travelling was not very easy, as the road was merely a track through the dense bush. Madam was the chief of her place, which was therefore known as "a woman's town." But it was none the worse for that; these women chiefs make very good rulers. Many of the people who remembered my visit to the old chief seemed very glad to see me again; there were many exclamations of pleasure, but I do not think any one was more pleased than myself at being so kindly greeted by Madam and her subjects.

After staying in her town for some little time and exchanging complimentary presents, Madam and her people conducted me to the railway lines, where we said good-bye after the great lady had promised to meet me later at Baiima, that I might obtain from a trading store a suitable gift for her. But to return to our present journey. We found Daru station all alive with people arrayed in bright-coloured clothing of every description. There was a great deal of trade waiting there, not only of the usual oil-palm products, but in camwood, and that of greater size than I had ever seen before.

The line from Daru runs quite close into the mountains that are all densely wooded; they are ever-green, always fresh, and so we continue over the very fine iron bridge across the Moa river until upon clearing the mountain-pass we run into the railway terminus at Baiima.

At last I am at my destination—Baiima. It is only about 4 p.m., so I have still two hours of daylight. The whistling of the engine as the train winds among the echoing mountains has been heard in the town long enough to give the people time

to flock down to the station to await their expected friends and to look after the goods they may have ordered.

Baiima is not only in the Hinterland, but is still, except for the railway, "at the back of beyond."

The arrival of this one train every other day and its departure again for Freetown is the supreme event and excitement of the people, and it is an event that is an "eye-opener"—perhaps the greatest "eye-opener" they could have.

The station here is much like that of Bo, with a fine long raised platform; the scene on my arrival there is, as at the other platforms, gay with sunshine and a variety of bright colours. I have seen the same thing all along, but I am not yet too used to it to have lost the sense of the wonder of it; especially that I should have travelled 220 miles from Freetown in perfect comfort by train, and have arrived safely at this Hinterland terminus.

Months later, as I write this in England, my mind wanders back to the time—really so few years ago—when the whole of this region was, even to the Colonial Government, a *terra incognita*.

As I said at starting, there is nothing extraordinary about the Sierra Leone Government Railway except the fact that it is where it is, which fact, when you reach its remote terminus, strikes the traveller who has known Baiima in other days as remarkable indeed.

Of course it does not take long for the people to disperse with their friends and their small packages; the bulk of the heavy goods being consigned to European branch establishments is dealt with later. The engine is detached and goes to the end of the cutting, the actual end of the line at the time I am describing.

I am taken by an official to Government quarters, but it is not long before I begin to look round to see if the town I remember is still there.

Well, the native town certainly is there and very little changed; it is a large collection of mud huts, more or less squalid, a native town pure and simple, quite in the old style—or rather, although certainly simple, its purity is more than

doubtful. Government quarters, rough enough and of country style, are at present scattered here and there; but the General Manager of the railway has a fine European-built house on an elevated position at the back of the station.

The town is not at all important, but it has a certain historic value to me, as it was here that, in 1890, I made the first Government treaty for this Mando country. This friendly treaty was with the Chief Kabba Seh, who is still living, and who is indeed the only survivor of all the chiefs in Upper Mendi with whom I made treaties. Baiima is in Kabba Seh's chieftdom, but he resides at Gorohun (pronounced Gorn), about seven miles away in a S.S.E. direction.

There is not much interest in Baiima except, it would appear, to the Sierra Leone traders, who have simply invaded the place. The quantity of imported goods and of produce stored away in such a rabbit-warren as the native town is surprising, because were a fire to break out in one of those thatched huts there would be very little chance of saving the stuff. I have seen scores of such huts consumed in a few minutes. Here and there one or two decent but country-built houses are to be already seen; and very probably as improvements outside the native town are made, the town itself will be remodelled. The Sierra Leone traders are at present in possession of the place.

During a later visit, in 1908, I found that an extension known as "the new tramway extension" was nearly complete. As a matter of fact the term seems to me to be a distinction without a difference, as the tramway is a continuation of the railway, with the same gauge metals and rolling stock; it runs (for it is now open) seven miles further up to Pendembu in the adjoining country.

On the clearings at the top of the cuttings the Sierra Leone traders do their business. We have noticed these traders near the stations all along the line; but up at Baiima they have come in such force that if their stores continue running up at the present rate the tops of the cuttings and the levels of this new extension will in time be one long trading street. These traders are rapidly penetrating into the country all along the

line and feeder-roads, always working over a large area, and they seem to have a greater hold on the people here than anywhere else. The fact is that the natives of the oil-palm belt have greater purchasing power than some others, and when they make money they spend it; so "Kissy Road" seizes on every cutting, such as this, as soon as it possibly can.

The trader begins humbly, puts up his little shanty, locally called a shimbek, on the top of the cutting, and hangs out his few bits of print and so on. Before long the shimbek gives place to a little house and then that to a larger one; but how all these traders are to make a living in the future opens a problem that may some day be rather difficult to solve.

At present, however, they are helping to solve another problem—I mean, how to deal with the congested neighbourhoods of Freetown. All along the line and feeder-roads you meet them not in dozens but in hundreds. It is a wonderful migration! Most of them, too, appear in greatly improved health and spirits, and freely express their thankfulness at being away from the overcrowded capital, and their satisfaction at the trade they are doing.

It is amusing, in places that three years ago were both inaccessible and unknown to the Sierra Leonean, to come across a Freetown trader with a good house, a large stock, with his wife gaily swinging in a hammock at the side of the store laughing and talking to another dusky lady, and to find he is only one of many others, some owning quite good houses each within its compound.

An English agent at one of the places on the line introduced me to such a scene, and to a certain old trader. The man at once exclaimed: "Oh, Mr. Alldridge, you may not remember me, but I know you quite well; for I remember seeing you at Freetown more than twenty years ago. And I often hear the natives of this country speak of you as the first white man who ever came to these parts. But they do not call you by your English name; they say 'Bowa,' a name which is known even to-day all through the country."

"Really," I said, "you look so happy and prosperous and your surroundings are so charming, I think you must be glad to get away from the fetid atmosphere of the Kissy Road and Kru Town into this fine, fresh air and beautiful scenery."

"Ah, thank God!" was the reply. "The Government has done well for us in opening up this rich country. For really in Freetown a great many people hardly know how to make a livelihood, how to live one day after another. What with the increase in the European population, and so many natives coming into Freetown, living at all was a serious question there. I don't know what would have happened if the country had not been opened up a bit."

"Yes," I said. "I was in Freetown a few days ago, and walked through what used to be some of the most populous streets, and I remarked many times the great difference in the number of people about. It is still very much overcrowded, but not to the extent it used to be."

All these traders had the same tale to tell, and seemed thankful for the change in their lives; but I fear that another change is coming, if it has not already come, in the opening up of branch trading establishments by the leading European firms of Freetown, with whom the small Creole traders have no chance of competing; although the Syrian traders will somehow manage not only to hold their ground but to carry out their original intention of making in five years enough money to enable them to return to their own country with a modest competency.

Before leaving this subject I will for the sake of business men in England give a list of the imported goods I noticed at Baiima, 220 miles up-country from Freetown; also the prices of some of them, which prices, when cost of freight and customs duties are considered, struck me as extraordinarily low—

Leaf tobacco from the hogshead . . .	1s. 6d. per lb.
Salt in original bags containing 30 lbs. . .	2s. a bag.
Madras handkerchiefs	6d. to 2s. each.

Fancy print in 6 yard lengths	2s. to 5s. a piece
Three-legged iron pots, according to size, running from 1 gallon to 20 gallons . . .	1s. a gallon.
Worsted fisher caps	6d. each.
Beads (black bugle, very popular)	3d. a lb.
Sardines in tins, containing about 15 fish, with patent opener attached	from 3d. a tin.
Kerosene oil, 20s. a case of 25 gallon tins, or	6d. a quart bottle.

But really to enumerate all the prices would be too tedious, so I will simply name some of the articles offered for sale to the admiring though as yet unsophisticated aborigines:—

Galvanised buckets.	Umbrellas.
The commonest perfumes.	Mugs.
Enamelled wash basins.	Jiggada beads.
Saucepans.	Salt beef.
Tin trunks.	Matches.
Tins and buckets of lard.	White cotton balls.
Fancy golf caps, 6d. each.	Tallow in small boxes.
Biscuits in barrels sold by the pound.	Fancy cloth wrappers.
Sugar.	Fez caps in a variety of colours.
Fancy scarfs.	White shirting.
Blue Bafts.	Tin bowls.
Tin cups.	Tam o' Shanter caps.
Mesh work singlets in fancy colours.	Khaki drill.
Head shawls.	White blankets.
Red blankets.	Hurricane lanterns.
Clay pipes.	Reels of cotton.
Waterproof coats.	Cloves, locally called "smidje," and worn on twine as a neck- let.
Needles.	
Pomatum.	

Gin in the little green cases only too familiar on the West Coast of Africa.

Demijohns of rum, both large and small, and a host of miscellaneous articles that manufacturers, British and foreign, are all eager to exchange for the produce of Nature's ever

obliging and never-failing Universal Provider—the oil-palm. And last, but not least, those imported yarns in all shades of colour, that are doing so much harm in stopping the production of the country-grown cotton and of the natives' pure vegetable dyes.

CHAPTER XIX

ALONG THE ROAD TO PENDEMBU

WHEN I had seen enough of Baiima I left the railway and started in my hammock for Pendembu, seven miles farther on. I had been up to Pendembu in 1893, when I thought the journey was across one of the worst pieces of ground I had ever travelled over. Road in these days there was none, only a narrow, single-file track, through numerous swamps as well as up and down many undulations; all wretched enough going for hammock-men and their load.

Along this same ground now runs the new extension tram-line, a continuation of the permanent way. The cuttings are through red laterite, some of them of considerable depth. The road itself is 12 feet wide, making with the clearings on each side an opening of 66 feet. It was already properly graded on my recent visit, although the metals were not then laid, and it was being used as a Government road, much of it running along a raised causeway over swamps.

This extension road goes through what we may call a natural botanical garden. The clearing on each side is at present covered as thickly with wild flowers as in spring a clearing in an English wood is with primroses. Great white lilies, thousands of marigolds and fern-covered palms make a delightful foreground to the mountains of the near distance. Up and down this road I meet some hundreds of people, and, as the tramway was still far from complete, large gangs of Mendi navvies working with a will and method that astonished me.

Every one here seemed well and active. I felt so unusually well myself that as I went along the easy road in my hammock without fear of danger I began to pity those who were having

a bad dose of fever on the Coast, or enduring the miseries of influenza in England. Pity naturally led to a train of thoughts, some of which I give merely for what they are worth and as quite tentative suggestions. They have arisen, however, mainly from what I have seen within the last few months, as all previous ideas of the Upper Country I am obliged to put aside, because things to-day appear to me in an entirely fresh light, and in point of fact are altogether different.

It seems to me now that there are certain classes of European people who might well take advantage of this fine and healthy Hinterland—that is, of those parts of it within the influence of the railway and its feeder roads. Just at present I will limit myself to the British mercantile man who is in fair health at home from May to November, but to whom the rest of the year is a nightmare of horror, when life is a burden and its one great affair how to breathe.

What the man evidently needs is sunshine, and plenty of it, in a fine air. Business, he says, cannot be left. Well, but say he is a Liverpool or Manchester man; perhaps out here he might be able to combine business with health in a manner he has never suspected. That of course depends upon the kind of man he is; and improved physical health often means greater activity of brain; so that the business man fleeing from the English winter may out here get not only the sunshine that means life to him, but, if a man of observation, stands a very good chance of making his expenses, as well as of gaining fresh ideas that he can turn to account at home.

Now things are so arranged that from November to March, the worst time in Great Britain, is the hottest, driest, and altogether the best time in this Hinterland. Baiima, and it is the country beyond this terminus I should prefer, can be reached in fourteen or fifteen days from Liverpool, or in even less time by the Belgian Congo line from Southampton.

The man I have in my mind leaves the British fogs feeling rather more dead than alive, but before he reaches Freetown he has already had a few days of tropical weather, which he begins to enjoy at sea as soon as he leaves Grand Canary and picks up the fair trade winds.

He arrives at Freetown. If he has no friends there with whom he can stay, he can put up at the only hotel, but I strongly advise him to get out of the town as quickly as possible; at all events to go on by train as far as Waterloo, where, as I have said earlier, there is a good hotel. After that he can resume his journey to Bo, and the next day to Baiima, by the route we have already traversed.

When looking for his night's lodging he need not be afraid of his life; that will be as secure as in his own house. He may not get the same accommodation as at home, but if he cannot accept what the country can provide, he should not venture to travel in West Africa. He may be sure of being courteously received, which is something nowadays, and will find the people, whether Sierra Leoneans or natives, most sociable, provided he shows himself equally so. Of course, if he has colour prejudice he should not go into a black's man country.

As for food, he will find a sufficiency of fresh beef, mutton, and fowls. He should as quickly as possible acquire a taste for rice and cassada; and when he has settled down his gun will provide him with many a nice bird for his table; and, of course, he will be able to get a good supply of bananas and other native fruits of the most delicious flavour.

He had better stay at Baiima for the night, and there make arrangements for going further. If he is going on by hammock he will have to employ carriers. He will also have to engage a native cook and personal attendant; although it is possible he may find a man willing to serve him in both capacities for two pounds ten a month and board himself.

A few years ago he would have been obliged to travel by hammock or else walk. Walking is no doubt good exercise for those who can manage it in this climate. There is a vast difference in men's constitutions. For myself, in the tropics I am never out of a bath of perspiration; but I know many Europeans who cannot get into a perspiration without long and violent exertion. I can instance one especial occasion when a young British official was accompanying me a few miles up the country under a burning sun. I, in my hammock,

was bathed in perspiration, while he, walking beside me, went on for an hour and ten minutes before the first bead was seen on his forehead. When it arrived he got into the hammock his boys had been carrying. This is a common occurrence both with Europeans and natives, and I mention it to show the different ways in which different skins are affected.

In the present day a man can bring his bicycle with him and use it on the Government roads. Here is a photograph of a British engineer, Mr. Harry Gilbert, the Assistant Director of Roads, whom I met flying along the very track I have just described, and who, recognising me, took me to his camp halfway between Baiima and Pendembu—the camp shown in the picture.

I should advise our traveller to study this photograph seriously, and to ask himself if it is what he would like as a temporary home and basis of operations. If he thinks he would like it, let me tell him how he should set about getting it.

For my own part I can imagine nothing more pleasant. As for Mr. Gilbert, with whom I had the pleasure of lunching, and a very good lunch too we had, he seemed to be enjoying the best possible health and spirits, and spoke highly of the country and of the people.

Immediately after lunch I took this photograph, the first of a man and a bicycle I had taken in Africa.

We will suppose our traveller does not wish to live in a crowded and not too pleasant native town, but, as is now the custom, proposes segregation in an encampment of his own, and with his own tent or house. He should, in the first place, realise the importance of dealing directly with the paramount chief of the locality in which he wishes to settle. He should go to this chief and ask him to put up—say a mud house, which he can design to suit his own requirements.

The chief will say in effect: "All right! I put up the house and lend you the ground." And in a week or so the newcomer will find himself with his own house at a cost probably under £5. These houses are soon run up when undertaken by the chief, although if you went to work yourself

with your own men, you might be a long while about it. With the chief everything is readily collected; posts and rafters cut, palm-leaf thatching made, wattles obtained, the "tie-tie" rope and, lastly, the "mudding" all got together. Then at a given time a sufficient crowd of people will be put on who will finish it in two or three days. If he is more ambitious he can now employ a country carpenter who can put in wooden doors and windows.

As a specimen of arrangement let me describe Mr. Gilbert's house, which for size, convenience, and comfort is one of the best I have ever seen in the bush. First of all it was a large open shed thatched. It was isolated, standing entirely alone, well back from the track. Within was a large green canvas marquee with walls. This tent, of course, was from the Government stores and forms a delightful bedroom. In front of the marquee was the living room you see in the picture. The whole thing was spacious and very airy, furnished better than many a house in Freetown with tables and easy-chairs. But to me the most delightful feature was the happiness and contentment of my friend himself. His enthusiasm for his work was inspiring, and indeed when I saw the massive masonry of his new railway bridge I did not wonder that this was the case.

This bridge is 213 feet long and crosses the river Mauwa.

Mr. Gilbert was entirely alone, that is, without a European. He employed a large number of native labourers, under the paramount chiefs. He had smithies with native blacksmiths and also native masons and carpenters, whom he had himself trained during the construction of the Sierra Leone Government Railway. The whole labour employed was native, and it seemed to me that the men were more contented than if working in a large town. Everything appeared to be carried on most harmoniously, and certainly the work was progressing rapidly.

Mr. Gilbert is of course a very busy man, and has, moreover, been employed on the Government Railway for several years; the newcomer has his work to find and his experience to gain, and it is by getting hold of such men and seeing such work that he will gain the knowledge he needs. Isolation and want

of regular employment will probably, after the first novelty has worn off, be very trying, but he will feel that the sunshine has brought new life to him, and although down on the Coast most people get fever sooner or later, yet I think the chances are that in this high altitude he will escape it. I met no sick Europeans, Sierra Leoneans or natives in this up-country; on the contrary, every one seemed in excellent health. It was a pleasure to me to be away from the continual growl of the Coast.

If our traveller is a Manchester man it is not unlikely that he may soon come across some of his own goods. He may see men and women walking about in cloth of his own make, and will notice what patterns of those cloths are most in fashion, and he will endeavour to find amongst the native cloths patterns that may be utilised in his own business. In the up-country trading stores, although a Manchester man and perhaps only understanding cotton goods, he will be surprised at the heterogenous collection of things that are offered to the natives, and it will occur to him that, numerous as these articles are, it might be greatly to his own or his friends' advantage to introduce still another article.

It will perhaps also strike him that although the people only know at present what has been offered to them, that is, the very cheapest and commonest goods, there may be in a short time, when the natives are better informed, a demand for things of a superior quality. Already the people are beginning to discover that such a thing as difference in quality exists.

When he has carefully studied a few native "country cloths," with their indelible dye and their capacity for almost endless wear, he will no doubt come to the conclusion that these people want textile fabrics that are really durable.

Of course, like children, the natives are at first pleased with what catches the eye and appears cheap; this may and will go on for a time, probably for a considerable time, but it cannot last. A word is enough, or even, as they say in the neighbouring French colony, half a word. Here is that half word.

We will suppose that our traveller goes pretty comfortably through the dries, but with April will come tornadoes, the

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certain precursors of the change of the season. He will then begin to remember it is time for him to be moving. He may also recall the familiar line of Browning :

“ Oh, to be in England now that April's there ! ”

and to have affectionate memories of the English spring and a longing to see the primroses and the budding hedgerows.

So he will pack up his traps and make tracks for the old country, and indeed he is wise—as a mere tourist—to get away before the rains set in.

He will know exactly how long it will take him to get from his up-country station, say, Baiima. He can leave Baiima at 7.30 A.M., arrive at Bo in the afternoon, remain there the night, resume his journey the next morning about 7 A.M., and reach Freetown about 5 in the afternoon, where he must stop until the following Monday.

The Elder-Dempster steamers arrive with the precision of clockwork. If his room in Freetown gives him a distant view of the harbour, he will very likely upon rising on Monday notice his steamer, three or four miles off, making for the harbour. The steamer will remain in port for at least six hours, so he will have ample time to get on board comfortably.

Light trade winds may perhaps be experienced in going to Las Palmas, Grand Canary, and possibly a fair wind homeward to Plymouth or Liverpool, where his expectations of the English climate may be all that he anticipated—or, on the other hand, may not be. Here we will leave him for the present in, we hope, greatly improved health and with a stock of new ideas, some of which he may be able to turn to account for himself and the dusky people with whom he has passed the last few months. At any rate, his short sojourn will have given him an interest in the place and the people, and will have taught him to discriminate between the still unhealthy coast-line and the salubrious, high-lying Hinterland of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, now within the railway's sphere of influence.

To such a tourist we will gladly say not “good-bye,” but “au revoir !”



WAR FENCES

Formerly most of the towns were surrounded by these fences or stockades, which were usually about 20 ft. apart. They have now been prohibited by Government.

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But to return to Mr. Gilbert and his bridge. It was incomplete, so I had to cross the Mauwa by a frail native arrangement. As this was in the dries it was all right, but these low rough bridges are very insecure besides needing constant repair, and during the rains, when the torrents pour down from the water-sheds, are frequently carried away bodily or rendered impassable. When this happens a ferry canoe is in some cases available.

After leaving Mr. Gilbert I continued along the road meeting many natives, mostly from Liberian territory, carrying produce, until in the distance I saw a number of Mendi navvies engaged upon the earth-works for the new terminus at Pendembu.

Pendembu, now the terminus of the "extension tramway," is still unknown even by name to the majority of people in Freetown and in the Protectorate.

On my recent tour I re-visited it with interest, as it was connected in my mind with events that are now historical. I arrived in January 1908 in comfort, and without any remarkable adventure, by the carefully graded extension road, to find numbers of natives hard at work preparing the ground for the new station. Native industry under scientific supervision was actively engaged under as peaceable conditions as might be met with in Great Britain. The scene and the town offered, indeed, a very striking contrast to the Pendembu I had officially visited in 1892, at the time of the Sofa war.

In those days Pendembu consisted of three towns, each surrounded by dense war-fences. These towns were mere collections of squalid native huts; there was no attempt at carpentry; there were not even nails.

Here, as indeed everywhere throughout what is now the Protectorate, the dread of the Sofa war-boys pressed heavily upon the people. All this now belongs to the past and is rapidly fading even from local memory. On my recent visit all was changed. The squalid huts with their barbaric war-fences had given place to a town with a fine open quadrangle containing some of the best native houses in the country.

Pendembu, destined it would seem to become an important place before long, is in the Upper Bambara country.

Here is a photograph I recently took of the present paramount chief, Kutubu, who is shown sitting in front of his new house. Notice the lattice work, the steps, and the door, rough, indeed, but an immense advance upon the huts of olden days, when such a door was never to be seen in this region, and when nearly every line was out of the perpendicular.

Chief Kutubu struck me as a highly intelligent and progressive personage. He is of sufficiently mature age to be relied upon; evidently feels the importance of his position as a native ruler, while realising the necessity of implicit obedience to all Governmental instructions. He is physically a fine-looking man, tall in stature and of engaging manners, who will doubtless be of much assistance in securing the intelligent carrying out, under the immediate supervision of the District Commissioners, of such ordinances as affect his chieftdom. He has a son at the Bo School.

By the side of this chief stands his secretary and interpreter, Mr. Allen.

In these days paramount chiefs have a much greater recognised power and have much more to do with the Government than formerly, although as yet few of them understand the English language sufficiently well to attend to the necessary correspondence themselves. The secretary is, therefore, at present a very important person, specially qualified for the post. He must be really well versed in the English language, able to write an intelligent letter, and to attend to his chief's correspondence in an official manner, as well as to translate correctly all official communications and to interpret faithfully every matter that is brought to the notice of the chief by the Creoles or by the natives of those tribes who do not speak Mendi.

Under Chief Kutubu not only has the residential town of Pendembu made great progress in respect to its buildings, but in the improved condition of its people. In fact, as I travelled in these higher districts now under the influence of the "steam



KUTUBU

The Paramount Chief of Upper Bambara with his Secretary.

MR. HARRY GILBERT AT HIS CAMP, 223½ MILES FROM FREETOWN

This house consists of a large open shed thatched. Within is a large green canvas marquee with walls, which serves as a bedroom, and the space in front as a living room.

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horse," it was impossible not to be aware of the wonderful change that has passed over them. It is difficult to describe how it has been effected, but there is an ever-recurring evidence that a powerful current of civilising influence is continually passing up from Freetown along the railway; influences that are already bearing excellent results, and which as time goes on will lead to subtle but far-reaching developments that will ultimately produce changes in the right direction provided the Hinterland is not flooded by trade liquor.

It was in Pendembu in 1892 that I held one of the most memorable of my up-country meetings. This meeting extended over three days and was convened in a great open space, known as the Korbangai, between the three fenced towns, in front of a large and curiously shaped cotton-tree. Here were assembled the late chief Kai-Lundu with about five hundred of his followers, the late chief Niagwa, the late chief Momo Baba-hu, and chief Kabba Seh, the only survivor of this group of native rulers. Altogether there were about a thousand men present, most of them armed with flint-lock guns and swords.

On the morning of the day on which I had hoped to begin the palaver I heard a great firing of guns, which I was told announced the public appearance of the great chief Niagwa. This Niagwa was a most arrogant man, who did not always observe sufficient courtesy towards the British Government, although he required to be treated with much ceremony himself.

A little later the corporal of my escort reported his return from seeing Kai-Lundu, to my mind the finest specimen of a chief I had ever met, and who was then, and to the end of his life, a faithful friend to me. Kai-Lundu, my corporal informed me, had just had a visit from Niagwa. This, I felt certain, meant annoyance for me. And so it proved, for Niagwa had informed Kai-Lundu that the Mori-man had "looked ground," and had foretold that if a meeting were held that day there would be trouble between these two chiefs which would end in a fight between their people. Added to this, said my

corporal, both chiefs had had dreams during the past night to a similar effect.

A few minutes after I went to the Korbangai, where I found my friend Kai-Lundu sitting under a tree looking very fine, and holding two bright spears of native iron that glittered in the sun like silver, a characteristic of this beautiful metal.

While we were talking we noticed a great crowd of armed men appearing through the war-fence of Pendembu, accompanied by much shouting and beating of tom-toms. A line of war-boys and people was formed up on each side of the gate of the fence, through which advanced the mighty chief Niagwa, with a horde of followers in the rear.

Niagwa came up to me, shook hands, and said he was then about to visit me at my house in the adjoining town of Kangama to inform me that that day must be given up to dancing and play, but that to-morrow morning early he would be ready to attend the meeting.

Kai-Lundu having arrived at the same decision I acceded to the wishes of the two chiefs, as it would have been obviously impolitic to have gone against them; so that day was given up to festivities, great numbers of people coming in from the adjacent country.

Next morning I arose at seven o'clock with a very bad cold in the head. The meeting was, however, opened at 10.30 and continued to 4 p.m., when we had to disperse owing to a heavy downfall of rain. The meeting was resumed at 9.30 the following morning, and I did not leave my seat until 6 p.m., my only refreshment during the day being two biscuits and some cold tea.

The occasion was one of vital importance to these people, much of whose country had been destroyed by constant wars, and who were even then living in perpetual dread of a Sofa invasion on a larger scale than ever. It was a time, in fact, when the appalling condition of the country would have stirred the heart of any true patriot, and, as I thoroughly believe, did so stir both Kai-Lundu, and the then chief of Pendembu, the aged Moma Ba-ba-hu. For this last named

I entertained the greatest respect, because, against the wishes of his own people, he was the first chief to join the contingent of chiefs I with great difficulty collected and brought down to Bandasuma to meet the Governor, Sir Francis Fleming, in the following year, 1893.

As for the mighty Niagwa, the result of the day's meeting was, as far as he was concerned, a burning desire, not to save his country, but to fine his two brother chiefs six slaves and one cow each; and what he wanted of me was that I should consent to the enforcement of these penalties.

In those days there was no Protectorate; the chiefs were the absolute rulers of the country. I really had no power to interfere with their country customs, and slavery was then one of their customs. All I could do, therefore, was to inform the meeting that although I had no wish to interfere with their methods of settling their disputes, they were all to understand very clearly that I could have nothing to do with the fining of the chiefs in the way suggested. It was then Saturday, I added, and Sunday was our rest day, so I would say what I had to say on the palaver on Monday.

On Sunday Niagwa, the causer of the trouble, was unwell, and expressed a wish to have some "white man's medicine"; such is the touching confidence of the native. So by one of his krubas or warriors I sent him half-a-dozen pills of a much advertised make. I called upon him next morning and asked him if he had taken the six pills I had sent him. He replied that I had only sent him three, which he had taken.

It transpired that his kruba, although he was taking the pills to his own chief, had felt it quite impossible to give him the whole half-dozen, so had purloined three, notwithstanding the fact that I had already given him six for his own use.

Niagwa was not well enough to appear on Monday, so I had to wait another day; but at last on Tuesday the whole palaver was settled, greatly to my satisfaction, and certainly to that of two out of the three chiefs. Niagwa, however, never took kindly to the idea of a Protectorate, and during the native rising in 1898 he took a prominent part, with the

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result, which to a man of his temperament must have been peculiarly distressing, that he was deported to the Gold Coast, where he died not long since.

The Government road had been continued—but when I saw it had not been properly graded—beyond Pendembu, and nearly up to the boundary between Liberia and British territory, which in this direction terminates at the small town of Kenewa, lying some little distance off the road under several large cotton trees.

A good deal of this road I found so undulating that I could only compare it to a switch-back; but I was given to understand that there were no natural obstacles that would prevent its being graded, and ultimately being converted into a permanent railway track if needed.

The oil-palm is plentiful here, so it is to be hoped that some day the railway may be continued to the boundary, and perhaps even further, to the important and well-known town of Kanre-Lahun, in the Luawa country, which by the boundary delimitation, has fallen within the Negro Republic of Liberia.

This is one of these curious divisions that sometimes arise in boundary delimitations, as it has so divided the Luawa country that one half, from the town of Gehun, is British, while the other half is Liberian. In consequence of this division the Chief of Luawa is just now, so to speak, divided; his residential town being Kanre-Lahun in Liberia, while Gehun in the British Protectorate is also part of his territory.

I went along the Government road in my hammock sharply uphill and down again until at the end of the road I dropped into a valley swamp covered with dense masses of bracken interspersed with large white lilies, the track rising to a slight elevation at the base of thickly wooded hills. On the elevation stands the town of Kanre-Lahun.

It was fourteen years since my last visit there in the days of my friend the late chief Kai-Lundu (whose war name was Gendeme, meaning "short and stout"), whom I could not help missing sadly enough. Certainly he was one of the most intelligent chiefs I ever met; powerful, a mighty man of war, but capable of understanding what was for the lasting interest



FARUNDA

The successor to the late Kai Lundu, paramount chief of the Luwa Country. He is seated on the left of the illustration.

March

of his people, and universally beloved for miles around; a chief who was never spoken of except in the highest terms.

In those days here, as at Pendembu, there were three towns, encircled by war-fences. For some years past such fences have been prohibited by the Government, consequently the towns have been merged into one. In the centre of this town there is now a very large open space where the people can sit about, under such shade trees as the orange, kola, young silk-cotton trees,—and what are locally called “plum trees,” although I cannot say I ever saw anything like a plum on them.

A meat market is held in the centre of this space, and sheep and cattle graze near it.

There are a very large number of people always coming and going from the adjacent countries, besides the resident population.

Upon my entering this town I proceeded to the open space, where I was received with the greatest cordiality by the present paramount chief Fabunda, the successor of the late Kai-Lundu. He was attended by a great number of his people and friends, among whom was Kai-Lundu's head-widow, Mammi Guri, who embraced me before the whole assembly—a salutation I at once returned.

This patriarchal mode of greeting may seem strange and embarrassing, but I construed its meaning country-fashion, and as I well knew that it was one of the highest honours that could be bestowed upon me, I did not fail to appreciate it. So public a welcome was a passport to the good graces of everybody; the elders among them perhaps remembering, as no doubt his widow did, that with such a salute had Kai-Lundu himself greeted me in the years that were gone for ever. Such personal attentions are extremely welcome to those who can rightly interpret them, and greatly help to smooth the path of an explorer.

When I was leaving, Mammi Guri was very anxious to know what she could do for me, and removed from her wrist a fine bangle composed of three metals—copper, silver, and brass, twisted together, which she begged me to accept. I did so, and in return presented her with a native silver ornament,

with which she retired to her house; she soon returned, however, and pointing to her necklet, showed me that she had suspended my gift there.

Kanre-Lahun was the limit of my tour of last spring.

I found that a good deal of small trading was going on there, but it differed in some respects from what I had seen along the railway route. It seemed to be the centre for the surrounding countries, such as the Konno, Bandi, Bundi, Vassa, Gissi, and other tribes; some with a distinct language, although Mendi would generally pass.

As soon as I entered the town I felt the difference of its surroundings, especially in the absence of European traders; although in a small way European goods were brought across the frontier from Baiima, about twenty-four miles distant, upon which duty had to be paid to the Liberian Commissioner located in his quarters just outside the town.

The article of the greatest importance was undoubtedly salt, which was brought from Baiima in 40 lb. bags, a native carrying, if for himself, three of these bags as a load.

When this salt is brought into Kanre-Lahun for transport further on, it is repacked into cylindrical palm-leaf bundles weighing about eight pounds each, and then a quantity of these bundles are packed into the ordinary palm-leaf hamper.

It seems to me that very few imported articles find their way up here from the Liberian coast-line, everything apparently coming through the Sierra Leone Protectorate and so on from the terminus at Baiima.

This was the limit of the tour I have been describing. I returned to Pendembu, remained there some days and began my return journey to the coast by hammock, by way of the bush, gradually losing the influence of the railway.

CHAPTER XX

BACK TO THE COAST BY SWAMP, BUSH, AND FOREST

The first verse of the National Anthem in the Mendi language

GEHWOR MAHAI BAU

Gehwor ma mahai bau
I lembi (ka)mu mahu
Gehwor mahai bau.
Baiawa veh giyeh
Kor(hu)neh ta sembehwa
Kor i lembi mu mahu
Gehwor mahai bau.

GOD SAVE THE KING

God the king save
Long to live over us,
God save the king.
Great strength give to him,
Gladness and exaltation
So that he may long live over us,
God save the king.

MY journey from Pendembu down to the Coast was by hammock, very much in the old familiar style.

I always use a palm-string hammock in preference to a cloth one, as it is not so hot and permits of free ventilation. Moreover, the strings are drawn tightly by the weight of the body, so that books, papers, specimens of leaves and flowers, &c., can be securely carried, simply interlaced between the taut strings.

In selecting boys as hammock-bearers or as ordinary carriers of loads, I have found it desirable to avoid those with stentorian voices, or one of whom the boys say, "him get talk like tornado." These loud-voiced fellows become after a time a regular nuisance in the towns, and they are usually the ones who cause disturbances and sow seeds of discontent among their comrades.

Before starting, unless you are going through a country in which food is plentiful and can be purchased, it is well if possible to carry sufficient rice with you, or to give the boys

daily, while on the march, a subsistence allowance. It is useless to advance more than a shilling or two before starting, as it would probably be gambled away or otherwise wasted.

The whole of the journey to the coast lay through Mendiland, a general name that includes a great number of countries, or, as they are now called, "chiefdoms."

The Mendis are the most powerful tribe in the eastern part of the Protectorate, and I believe that before long their language will be universal in the Sherbro and other contiguous parts of Mendiland.

To my mind the Mendis are one of the hardest-working and most trustworthy of the tribes. They and the Timinis made the greater part of the railway. They have proved most excellent navvies, and, under British platelayers, are regularly employed upon the permanent way.

I watched them excavating for the new extension, where they were working in great gangs with, it appeared, a will and an energy it delighted me to see.

Many Europeans, with little or no experience of these people, are ever ready to complain of the laziness of the natives, especially of the Mendis. I have personally had a very great deal to do with the Mendis for many years; I have always stood up for them and shall continue to do so, because I am satisfied that they are the coming people, and that before long, with the training that the Government school at Bo is giving them, the latent intelligence of this great tribe will be developed, and we shall find in them qualities, administrative, commercial, and social, which have never yet had an opportunity of displaying themselves. These qualities are there, of that I am quite sure, and when they are given full play will materially assist the march of civilisation.

The Mendis are a numerous tribe, scattered over a very wide area, and, if I am not mistaken, will some day play a very great part in the future of West Africa. Nor am I alone in this opinion; there are others who have learned to value the Mendis. Recently on board a German steamer going from Sherbro to Freetown I met a German military officer on furlough from Cameroon.

"We like the Mendis," he told me; "they make excellent native soldiers for us. We should be glad of many more. We treat them well; we pay them well; and they are so intelligent that they soon learn our drill, and we are able to promote them rapidly."

No wonder that with this kind of treatment and with such inducements numbers of Mendis are leaving their own country; we shall, however, meet plenty of them on our way down to the Coast.

But it is time we started.

After bidding good-bye to Pendembu we went through a most magnificent palm-tree country; it was in fact so grand that I was very often compelled to stop to admire the extreme beauty of the trees as we proceeded through the oil-palm forests.

Now and then we came out into open spaces which during the rains are swamps, but in the dries, bogs of thick mud called locally "potta-potta," covered with a profusion of ferns and lilies—a wilderness of perfectly beautiful vegetation. A narrow track is made through the tangle of dainty fronds, upon which is placed an arrangement of sticks and lengths of oil-palm, stepping-sticks instead of, as with us, stepping-stones.

This foot-bridge is generally in a rotten condition; one's feet sink into it as if into a sponge, so that going is often far from easy; besides which I have found that it is in these open and unshaded swampy places that the sun is most trying. My helmet has a brim of considerable width, but I take the precaution of tying my large bandana handkerchief (of a kind I always use in the tropics) round my neck bunched up at the nape to break the force of the rays that beat down upon it. An alarming injury may be done in a moment, so that in these open spaces, short as they are, one cannot be too careful.

A pleasant contrast to these swamps was sometimes afforded by a good stretch along a Governmental feeder-road, as, for instance, the one between Baiima and Malema, about twenty-four miles, where I took a photograph of the oil-palms growing on the sides and summits of the hills.

Then again after a long hot march there would be a halt in the forest among the tall trees, or a rest amidst the smaller vegetation of the bush, reached perhaps after we had crossed some fallen trunk by rough steps not unlike what we call hurdles.

In describing my journey back to the Coast, I shall, however, dwell not so much upon the vicissitudes of hammock travelling, nor upon the natural features of the up-country landscape, as upon the changes I observed in the natives and their customs since the days when I first penetrated this remote Hinterland as Travelling Commissioner.

Perhaps the first thing to strike me was the arrival of what the natives call "Cop-por."

In the conversation of my hammock boys with each other I frequently distinguished this word, indeed it seemed their main topic. It is the equivalent of our "cash."

Now when I was here in the old days money, that is, coin, was practically unknown; so much so that there were times when my British coin would not pass in exchange for the domestic commodities I required, and when if my silver was received it was promptly melted down for ornaments; there was no local use for it as coin.

Of gold they knew nothing. Once when I paid a chief ten pounds in sovereigns he played with them like a child before his people in the open barri; evidently admiring them, but only vaguely understanding that I had to pay him ten, which he at length received upon my assurance that it represented his stipend.

At another time one of my police escort brought a sovereign to me asking if I could oblige him with change. I could not, but told him that I had just paid a chief ten pounds in shillings, adding that if he asked the chief he perhaps might get the change.

The chief, who had not yet left the barri, was sitting with the silver in front of him, put up in little heaps of twenty. The sovereign was taken to him; he looked at it in the man's hand, but when he was told that he would have to give one heap of silver in exchange, he said that twenty was too much to give for one piece, and refused to do it.



THE ROAD BETWEEN BAIIMA AND MALEMA

In the Upper Mendi Country. Indigenous oil palms are growing upon the hill-summits.



A SWAMP FERNERY

The sticks on the left perform the service of stepping-stones over the potta-potta or mud swamp.

Nowadays, so up-to-date are the remotest parts of the Hinterland that every one not only understands what cash is, but requires to be paid in cash both for work and produce. A limited amount of barter still goes on among the traders, but even this is rapidly diminishing.

All labour must be paid for in coin, and the people like to have cash that they may be free to purchase what they like where they like. "Cop-por" is now the one thing they all value, that everybody desires to possess, and even the "tipping" system is gaining ground unpleasantly.

Clothing, except for chiefs and other important personages, was in the old days little known; but what there was was all made from the native-grown cotton, woven in the native loom, and dyed indelibly with the native vegetable dyes. It was thoroughly good and extremely durable.

Now the up-country lady, like her Creole sister at Freetown, likes to wear imported cottons with a bright kerchief tied round her head, and bedecks herself with all kinds of cheap beads instead of the massive silver bangles and armlets of former times; while there is hardly a town now, however remote, in which there is not a Susu tailor sitting on a verandah working away at his sewing-machine making up karki Sokotu trousers (a kind of loose Turkish pantaloons) and long gowns for the men, and light jumpers or "bubas" for the women. These tailors are found in places far beyond the influence of the railway, and seem to be all over Mendiland. There must be hundreds of them. All head-gear is now imported.

Everywhere I found things in a state of transition, the new curiously mingling with the vanishing past. Many of the old interests had indeed already vanished. I missed them not without, in some cases, a feeling of regret and sadness.

Often the track is merely along the fringe of the forest, and at a short distance you come out on to open ground that has at one time been cultivated, but is then lying fallow.

Under the Mosaic law¹ the Hebrew was commanded to work his ground for six years, "but the seventh thou shalt let

¹ See Exodus xxiii. 10 and 11, and Leviticus xxv. 3 and 4.

it rest and lie still." To-day the Mendi acts on a different principle, he works his clearing as long as he sees fit, and then lets it lie fallow for an indefinite period, or go out of cultivation altogether. Everywhere throughout the up-country you meet open spaces in which the wilderness is rapidly overtaking the old rice-fields, and you realise that an enormous amount both of land and labour is naturally wasted.

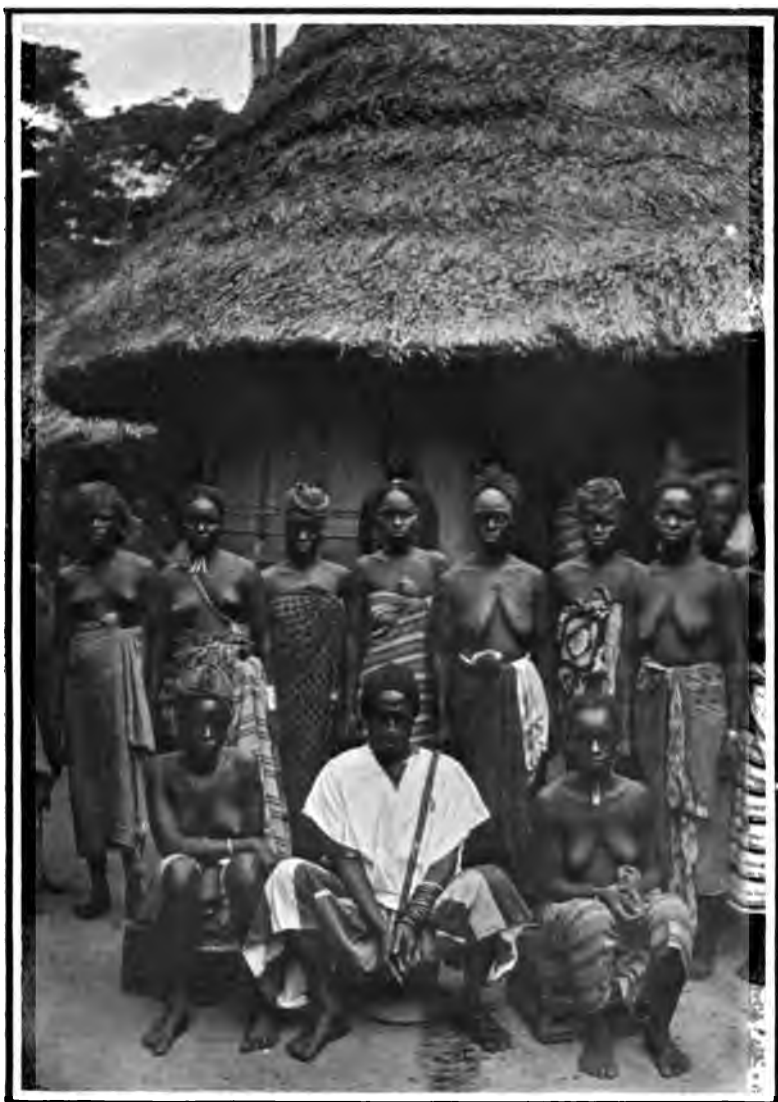
Now the Mendis are hereditary tillers of the ground, hoers we might rather call them, for their country hoe is their only implement; why then do they permit this waste to go on? Well, this opens up more than one serious problem that before very long will have to be most resolutely faced.

There is evidently a shortage of agricultural labour in the Protectorate; the younger people do not take to the land as their parents were forced to do: but if they are giving up a life for which they are by nature fitted, there must be reasons for it. Let us ask what these reasons are.

It seems as if even Mendiland were influenced by that wave of the world that everywhere is now driving the man of the field, tired of its weary monotony and its insufficient returns, to seek the excitement and novelty of the town. The town at least holds out hope and the prospect of pecuniary betterment.

Whatever the European farm-labourer feels in this respect, the African, who has been brought into touch with civilisation, feels also in his measure, and that measure is every day increasing.

It is true the African is better off than many European farm-hands, for by native law he is entitled to a certain amount of land within his chief's jurisdiction, which he can work for himself, and practically owns, although he cannot sell it. This was all very well, or at any rate he knew nothing better, until the making of the railway, when he discovered that as a navvy he could earn a good and regularly paid wage that brought him out of his solitudes into what was to him an amazing new world; to the centre of which, Freetown, he speedily gravitated in such numbers that a Mendi Reservation there became necessary. When the railway was finished



AN OLD-TIME CHIEF, UPPER MENDI

**Wearing "Krubu" bangles made from the pad of the elephant, and attended
by several of his wives.**

the Mendi man in Freetown could not always find work, so an "Unemployed" problem is arising, as well as the question of "How to keep the people on the land"? Meanwhile too much of the land is lying fallow, while in Freetown the price of labour has considerably fallen. The native farmer is not a paid labourer, nor can he afford to pay labour. Himself, his wives and children, must do all the work, therefore cultivation has only been possible hitherto on a small scale and by the most primitive methods. He often owns remarkably fertile land, but has no knowledge of how to turn it to profitable account.

It seems to me that what is now needed is the cultivation of much larger areas by really scientific methods, under a system of British ownership and supervision, with farm-hands who must be paid, and paid a living wage.

The British agriculturist would no doubt grow crops for exportation, but apart from this there is to-day an urgent demand for country-rice and cassada for the native population of Freetown, which would take an enormous quantity, if it could only get it. Country-rice is greatly preferred to imported grain as it is far more nutritious. There is also an increasing demand for it along the Coast. The totally inadequate supply of these staple commodities, without which the native cannot exist, is now rendering the price at Freetown almost prohibitive and causing great discontent; for I must again remark that Freetown produces neither of these all-important articles of food. Meanwhile, up-country the fallow wildernesses are everywhere in evidence.

In my own mind I am quite convinced that if the enormous natural wealth of the Sierra Leone Protectorate is really to be turned to account it must have British capital and plenty of it, British machinery, and above all, British brains.

It is often said that the Hinterland is no place for the British settler; but there are many, of whom I am one, who totally disagree with this. It may take time before the skilled agriculturist comes, but with the proved healthiness of the up-country districts and its new facilities for steam trans-

port, there certainly must be in the near future an opening for him.

This idea may be pooh-poohed by the European trader, but to those with progressive views and an intimate knowledge of the country, it seems not only feasible but quite likely to come to pass.

This rich country will not always continue to be a fallow-field, the pioneer is bound to arrive before long. He will be a man whose brains are needed, and he will have to make his own beginning. He must be able to "sit down," to have the gift of living by himself, and be prepared to adapt himself to the country and the life around him. The right man, the small master-man, working for himself, and not as an agent, is needed, and I think, if he could rough it for a time and had a little capital to go on with until his quick-growing crops were matured, he would not be long in reaping the first-fruits of a very considerable success.

He has not, however, come yet, and meanwhile there is still the Mendi's fallow-field.

But here follows another reason for the deserted clearing.

The reason why the country people do not always care to make farms is to be found more especially in lower Mendi near the Coast.

A white missionary, whose veracity was unimpeachable, who mixed much with the people of the country, had considerable knowledge of them, and was greatly interested in them, told me that he had heard from three different head-men quite recently their reasons for not caring to make farms for themselves, the cause being the same in each case.

"Why don't you make a big farm and live upon it?" he said to one man, from whom he received this answer:

"Sir, suppose I make a big farm so that I have rice enough to sell; if it is bigger than the farm of my chief I shall get palaver for that, which is certain to go against me, and I will be fined, perhaps in cattle, goats, or domestics, or the rice itself will be taken."

The chief (or a big man who will act for him) will wait until the rice has been harvested and cleaned before laying

the charge. The chiefs are extremely cunning in this way, and make the palaver when there is something tangible to levy on.

The missionary gave another instance. He had a hammock-man who could talk a little English. He was a big man of fine physique, and belonged to the Timini tribe, and was a faithful servant who had been with him in some of his long trips into the country. He noticed that this man possessed considerable intellect and was both observant and willing. In his opinion such a man could have done better work than carrying a hammock, and as he had learned that his father had been a "Santiggi"—that is, the principal man—he became interested in him and said:

"Suri, why don't you get a piece of land and live upon it with your wife, and work as hard there for yourself as you work for me? You would make more money, and be independent of me or any one else."

He replied, with a smile on his face:

"I did that, and I had a rice farm, several goats, and two cows. The chief brought palaver against my dead grandfather (my father being also dead), with evidence of Santiggis and other big men that my grandfather had incurred a debt, which I could not deny, knowing nothing about it, and they took everything I had to pay the debt. If I work for you I can keep my money and support myself and my wife and I am not troubled."

The young men are really afraid to advance and to accumulate money which may exceed that of their chiefs or elders, simply for the reason that under some pretext or other it will be taken from them.

It is all very well to argue that there is a remedy for this kind of treatment in the native country court, but it would be a very courageous native who would venture to apply to that court and thereby incur the certain displeasure of the big people, who might perhaps make it extremely disagreeable for him by secretly invoking the services of the "country-fashion man"; and it is quite unlikely that any native of subordinate position would lay himself open to being sworn by the medicine-man.

The "medicine-man" is still the most potent factor throughout the country, and although not very much in actual evidence to the uninitiated, is always in the background, and whenever his services may be required they are readily available.

Behind everything out here there is always fetish.

CHAPTER XXI

THE OLD CHIEFS AND THE NEW

AS I have already said, I missed many an old interest, but more than all else I missed the old chiefs, for many of whom I had entertained a sincere friendship.

The old patriarchal chief as I remember to have seen him in other days, walking about among his people with his large retinue of wives and followers, was an absolute ruler of autocratic power, whose word was law and whose authority was never questioned. Life and death were in his hands, and his people knew it.

But he has gone; his successor represents quite another order of rulers. The old paramount chief was supreme in his own country, accountable to no one; the present paramount chief is responsible to the British Government. His autocratic power has gone, but he is still a great personage, through whom the Government works, and in the mysterious domain of fetish he is still absolute.

On the down-journey I am now describing, I visited once more the only survivor of the chiefs with whom I had made the original treaties. This was at the town of Gorn, about seven miles from the town of Pendembu. While in this town I had a good opportunity of seeing not only this last of the old chiefs, but how the new order of government is working through the old. What I saw is of sufficient interest and importance to deserve more than a passing notice, which must be my excuse for describing in considerable detail how the present-day chiefs publish not only their own orders, but the instructions they have received from the Government that now, of course, over-rules everything.

As the paramount chiefs of Mendiland have no written law, fresh laws are promulgated by means of messengers, by

whom they are conveyed orally to the people. That these messengers may be recognised as trustworthy, not only by the chiefs but by those to whom they are sent, they have to submit to several country ceremonies connected with the different secret societies.

Supreme among these secret societies is, for the men, the Order of the Poro or Law; but this great institution is divided into several sub-orders, each having its own peculiar signification. The Poro can be used as an instrument for the greatest good or the worst evil.

The highest degree of the Order, known as the Kaimahun, is sacred to the chiefs, who are themselves sworn to secrecy in the innermost recess of the Poro bush.

It is reported, and I believe with truth, that one or two Europeans have of late been initiated into the Poro Society; but I am satisfied they could only have been admitted into the outermost circle, which the majority of men and boys join.

The members of this outer ring have no more voice in the government of the Poro than a "Tommy" has in that of the British army. They are there to be instructed and to carry out the orders of their superiors, the chiefs.

When I visited Kabba Seh, the Paramount Chief of the Mando country, at his residential town of Gorn, the new tramway extension was being continued through this chief's land. Here is a photograph of my host sitting, attired in an elaborately worked country gown, with his three young wives beside him. His son Albert stands behind him.

This old chief is the only survivor of those with whom I made the original friendly treaties, in the name of the Government, in 1890, when Albert was quite a small boy. The father speaks no English; the son has been educated in Freetown and not only speaks most excellent English, but writes a good letter, in which he can express himself clearly and intelligently. He relieves his father, who is now somewhat feeble from age,¹ of much of his administrative work, and is at present supervising the labour supplied by the old chief to the Government

¹ Since writing this, the old chief has died and his son Albert has succeeded him.



KABBA SEH

The paramount chief of the Mando country, Upper Mendi, with some of his wives. Albert, the heir-apparent, is standing.

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for the railway extension. I mention this to show how complete a revolution there has been in country matters. Here we see what has been done in an isolated case, with the son of one chief; but, as I have already mentioned, at the Government school at Bo, which is entirely devoted to the education of the sons and nominees of chiefs, the same kind of thing is being done on a larger scale and on even more practical lines.

On my visit to Kabba Seh, my old friend, knowing the interest I take in country ceremonies, informed me that at his brother's town of Lavuma the "Binni Poro devil" was "to be pulled" that afternoon.

This devil had been concealed in the Poro bush adjoining the town for some days, and the "pulling" would be the bringing him out to the notice of the people.

The chief went on to tell me that the reason for making this Poro was to let the people within his chiefdom know that he required them to observe two things—the first that they were to give their best attention to the Government work on the extension road then in process of construction for the railway, and the other that they were properly to prepare their palm-kernels, palm-oil, and their camwood before offering it for sale to the traders.

These, from the British point of view, were certainly admirable laws, although the method of promulgating them may appear strange and barbarous to us. It seems, however, that at present there can be no appeal to these people without some fetish ceremony. These fetish customs have gone on from time immemorial, but it is quite evident to me that they have nearly reached their limits, and that with the education of the young chiefs the beginning of the end must set in.

Let me now describe the ceremony of "pulling" the Binni devil as I saw it.

Accompanied by the young chief, Albert, I went by hammock to Lavuma, the town of his uncle, Bunduka.

This was along a very beautiful by-road through fine, shady glades. In the town, which was large and populous, I found that many of the elder people, especially the sub-chief himself, remembered me; and that the younger folks, who had heard

of "Bo-wa," my native name, as the first white man to come into the country, and the treaty-maker, were naturally anxious to have a look at me.

A great crowd consequently collected round the barri where the chief and I were sitting with the elders and gave me a hearty welcome. I must say the warmth of this welcome impressed me, as I very deeply believed it to be most genuine. They no doubt remembered what had been done for them in the past. The chief himself was very cordial and seemed much pleased to see me once more.

A house was allotted to me in a good position, and favourably arranged for holding receptions. It had a centre quadrangle, into which the people flocked in relays to such an extent that it was with difficulty I could get the place to myself. I managed, however, to secure a short rest, but was presently informed that the ceremony of "pulling out the devil" was beginning, and that the Nafari devil was already in front of my house, accompanied by his music-beater.

On looking out this was the devil I saw.

This Nafari was the herald of the greater devil, the Binni, who was still in the bush. He and his music-beater paraded the town, and his presence was the notification that all men of the Poro order were required instantly to repair to the Poro bush for the purpose of "pulling out" the Binni.

After a short time I heard a great shouting and beating of hollow bamboos. This announced that the men had succeeded in "pulling out" the Binni, who was then parading the town.

Presently the Binni with his crowd of attendants, followed by the whole population, drew up in front of my house. Pandemonium was then complete; I counted forty men, all drawn up in line, beating hollow bamboos which gave out a peculiarly weird sound.

Now this Binni is an extra powerful devil, as he unites in his own person the fetish of the pagan with the magic of the Mohammedan Mori-man. His costume is one of the strangest worn by any of the fetish devils. His body is enclosed in a cumbrous dress of long fibre; the head-gear is of sheep-skin with



THE BINNI PORO DEVIL.

His body is enclosed in a cumbrous dress of long fibre; the headgear is of sheepskin with side flaps; the face is entirely concealed, but there are two small holes cut in a large skin flap for the eyes to see through; his breast and back are hung with little wooden tablets covered with Arabic writing. Those wearing mitres are the Devil's satellites, called Bori. The shorter figure on the left is the Nafari or Herald; the others are Wujas or Messengers.

May

side flaps ; the face is entirely concealed, but there are two small holes cut in a large skin flap for the eyes to see through. This is all pagan, but the Binni's breast and back are strictly Mohammedan, being hung with innumerable little wooden tablets covered with Arabic writing that have been charmed by the Mori, or "bookman."

When the Binni shakes, and he is constantly shaking, all these little tablets rattle and add to the noise.

The Binni's principal satellites are two sets of young men to whom are allotted certain functions. Those wearing the mitre cap are called Bori, who run to and fro in front of the Binni, beckoning him to follow them by waving bunches of fibre. The others are the Wujangas or messengers, principally attending the Nafari, or herald. They rush about, waving their arms, which are festooned with long bunches of fibre, wildly.

No words must be uttered, all is done by show and gesticulation.

The Binni does not like standing about, he prefers to kneel or recline. He, however, covers a great deal of ground on his patrol, but in a spasmodic way. When he intends to move on he makes many feigned attempts, staggering as if intoxicated, and then gives a short sudden plunge forward, when he apparently becomes exhausted and sinks to the ground. The Wujangas rush up and fan him with a fibre-fringed wicker tray, upon which he recovers and goes on with his performance.

When he and his procession have been through the town the Binni is escorted back to the Poro bush, where the law is given orally to the Poro boys, and the Wujangas are then despatched with the actual words of the law throughout the Paramount Chief's jurisdiction, the Binni devil remaining in the Poro bush, but coming out to dance at intervals, until the Wujangas have returned and the Law has been given to the country.

Thus with fantastic ceremony the law is given ; but how, it will be asked, can obedience be enforced ? There is an ordinance which gives the chief power to punish his subjects to a certain extent in the native court ; but there is a still

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greater and more dreaded means of punishment, "the swear medicine," which to the native mind is all-powerful, and from which escape is impossible, as it can reach the evil-doer anywhere. It may inflict mysterious penalties; much of the terror it inspires lies in the mystery of its operation. It works like this: A man commits a theft in a town. When the owner of the stolen property discovers that he has been robbed he complains to the chief of the town, who directs him to send round a crier notifying the fact and inviting the culprit to come forward and make restitution, in which case he may possibly be forgiven. Failing his so doing the crier states that recourse will be had to the Tor-tor Behmor or country medicine-man, and instructions will be given the Tor-tor Behmor that he is to swear the offender upon the Tehlang or some other equally virulent fetish, which is supposed to take effect wherever the man may be.

This threat very often brings the delinquent to confession, whereupon the matter is adjusted; if not, the medicine-man proceeds for a consideration to work his oracle. Something is to happen to the guilty person, a serious malady is to attack some part of him, generally some part of his face is supposed to rot away.

If a person is found in such a condition it is said, "Some medicine has caught him or her."

Distressing cases are frequently met with. Diseases which a medical man would easily account for are put down to the effects of a country swear.

Fetish is still the most powerful agency at work in this part of Africa. Whether civilising influences will ever be able to dig down to the tap-root is one of those complex problems which only the future can solve; at present pagan and Mohammedan are alike enslaved by it, and even when the native professes Christianity it is very difficult for him to shake himself free from its subtle and all-pervading influence.

Further on my journey I stopped at the once famous town of Yandahu in the Javi country, which in earlier days had been the residence of my old friend Chief Vandi Sauwa, who had been the principal signatory to the treaty made with me

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for that country in 1890. He too was gone, and the present chief took me to see his grave, which [was a] mud tomb in a circular hut, a raised tomb in this case, although as a rule the grave is level.

The only things within this hut were a large white china wash-hand basin and jug, a metal spoon, an empty gin bottle, and an old string hammock hanging over the tomb but not extended.

On other occasions I have seen a fine hammock all ready awaiting occupation by the spirit of the deceased. I have also seen in a new sepulchre the remains of various articles of food and drink, and I have asked the chief if he believed that the spirit actually consumed the things. He would say: "It was the custom of the country, and that the food was always gone;" a strictly non-committal reply.

As a rule a sepulchre in a hut within the town is reserved for the big chiefs, but sometimes when a person of particular importance dies the place of his burial is kept secret. This was the case with the great chief Kai-Lundu of Kanri Lahun, the town that was the limit of the up-country tour I have just described.

Kai-Lundu was a very special friend of mine in whom I was able to place implicit confidence. I should have liked to have seen his grave on my recent visit, but, like that of Moses, the place of his burial was, I was told, unknown. When he was very ill he was taken away, and he had probably been dead some time before there was any public announcement of the fact. Kai-Lundu was a truly sagacious and far-sighted ruler, and is still remembered with affection and respect.

Almost all Mendis acknowledge the existence of a future state in some form or other, or believe that when he leaves this world man becomes a spirit. Of this belief we have evidence in the ceremony known as the "Tewe-jama." Four days after the death or burial of a male, or three days in the case of a female, the relatives cook for the dead. A portion of cooked rice and fowl is placed on the grave, the rest being eaten by the relatives. The evening preceding the third or fourth day the friends go to the grave, and the head of the

family says something like this: "We come to let you know that we have not forgotten you. We are going to give you food before you undertake your long journey, so you must wait for us in the morning."

"Tewe-jama" means "crossing the water," which strikingly reminds us of the classic fable of the souls of the departed being ferried over the waters of the subterranean world. It would indeed almost appear that many of the beliefs and practices of the ancient Egyptians had found their way to West Africa, and survive in the present customs of these Mendi people.

Although the dead chiefs rest in the town, the ordinary burying-place is generally just outside. The stone-edged graves are scattered about under the tall and massive trees, or in a beautiful grove of Kolas, the graves themselves being ornamented by various small things which once contained the little offerings of food that had been brought for the deceased. Sometimes, as I have seen, the relatives go to the grave and hold a kind of communion with the departed in these "praying places," as they are called. The presiding person invokes the aid of the dead, naming one by one the former officiating leaders now deceased, beginning with the last to the first known by tradition, who are all supposed to be living somewhere, and requests or offerings have to be presented through each in order of precedence. Many persons unacquainted with the inner workings of the native mind are very apt to attribute this and similar customs to "devil worship," but it would be much nearer the truth to ascribe them to "spirit or ancestor worship."

It is believed that there is a town in Mendiland near which is a mountain regarded as the home of the dead. As soon as a death occurs and the body is prepared for burial, a voice is said to be heard in reply to the wailing of the relatives, calling to the mourners to cease weeping, as the deceased has reached his or her destination. Oftentimes it is said that the deceased has been seen ascending the mountain, carrying a bundle on the head, supposed to be the cloth in which the body was enshrouded. As soon as the apparition disappears from sight



A GRAVE SURROUNDED BY GIN BOTTLES

The ceremony after the death of any person of consequence is called "pulling the cry," and is not unlike a "wake." Much gin is drunk, and the empty bottles are inserted necks downward in the earth round the grave. An empty demijohn which had contained rum, ornaments the hut on the left, and a broken gin bottle that on the right.

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a shout of welcome, greeting the stranger, is believed to be heard coming from the other spirits in their mountainous resting-place.

As regards future rewards and punishments the native ideas are very vague. Much no doubt depends upon what a people understands as sin that incurs future punishment; at all events it would certainly seem that there is some presentiment of such punishment, as the expression, relating to the future life, *Jea hugema lo va*, which literally means "There will be controversy there," is frequently heard.

The "keeping of the burying" may not take place until some time after the actual interment; that depends upon circumstances. The time selected is when the people are freest from work and can give themselves up to the "cry," which in the case of an important chief must be conducted with great ceremony and may be kept up for some days.

"Pulling the cry" for a great chief is a serious matter. The Wujangas or messengers are despatched in all directions to invite people to come to assist in "pulling the cry." "The cry" is not unlike a "wake"; there is lamentation and wailing, and great quantities of spirits, when obtainable, are consumed for the consoling of the mourners, and a bullock may be killed for the providing of the "funeral baked meats." This is for a very great personage. For more modest people nearer the trading places where spirits are easily to be had, keeping the burying will be on a smaller scale, and in place of a family vault the grave will be in the common cemetery.

As a contrast to the beautiful up-country resting-place in the Kola grove I give a photograph of a scene that I took near the coast. This was at Kase Town, Sherbro. Between the huts, if you look carefully at the picture, you will see a little bit of the Kase Lake. The place is within touch of the large trading factories in which any quantity of spirits may be bought. The price of a case of gin containing about a gallon put up in twelve square-faced bottles is something like six or seven shillings, and demi-johns of rum of from half a gallon upwards are to be had at a similarly low rate.

In this and other coast towns, after a death, when the

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body is interred and the "cry has been pulled," the gin-bottles that have been emptied during the ceremony will be collected and arranged around the grave neck downwards by way of ornament. In the instance represented by the photograph about ten cases of gin were consumed and the empty bottles placed round the grave, as here shown; but I have sometimes noticed two or three rows of such bottles.

The apex of the circular huts is adorned, the one by an empty demi-john once containing rum, the other by a smashed gin-bottle—the signs, if not of an advancing civilisation, certainly of the onward march of the European liquor traffic.

I have said that this photograph was taken near the coast, but on my latest tour I met for the first time native carriers with their palm-leaf hampers packed full of gin-bottles tramping through the bush in the remote parts of the Hinterland, so perhaps before very long, even the graves among the Kola trees may be encircled by gin-bottles—those pioneers of European progress.

Personally I am not a total abstainer, I believe in a moderate use of spirits, all the same I cannot help feeling ashamed of Europe when I look at that scene by the Kase Lake, for it seems to me to represent a depth of degradation for which the native is not responsible.

CHAPTER XXII

BYWAYS IN MENDILAND

THERE is no Salic law in Mendiland, consequently some of the native rulers are women, and very capable rulers these women prove themselves to be; such an one was the late Mammy, or to be more polite, Madam Lehbu, the Queen of Upper Gaura.

On my downward journey, when I arrived at her residential town of Mendikama, I at once inquired about her. I was informed she was very ill, suffering in fact from that sickness from which there can be no recovery—old age. Madam Lehbu had always been particularly kind to me. When I was in her town about fourteen years earlier I had given her a bottle of extra strong smelling-salts, which she called “hot sun” and greatly appreciated. I thought she would see me if possible, and told her daughter I should like to pay my respects to her. The daughter and one of the elders, therefore, led me to the hut, where I found Madam Lehbu lying in the centre of the place by the side of a big wood-fire. It was very dark and the old lady could not distinguish me, but she remembered me quite clearly and we recalled old days.

I was exceedingly touched by the affectionate attention the daughter showed to her aged mother, and by the evident respect by which Mammy Lehbu was treated by all around her; indeed, affection and respect seemed to pervade the atmosphere, and I was deeply conscious of the fact as the daughter tenderly raised her mother and supported her against her own knees, speaking to her in the gentlest tones. No white woman could have shown more filial affection. It had a great effect upon me, proving once more that beneath a

black skin there is a heart quite as capable of love and reverence as under a white one.

After a short conversation I left the hut, having previously given the old Queen a present of some country-made snuff, which I knew would please her; and I was not wrong, for she immediately hugged the packet to her.

Not long after I heard that my dear old friend had passed away; but I was glad to have seen her once again. There are those who fancy that black people cannot feel real sorrow, but they can have had very little personal acquaintance with West African natives, at all events with the Mendis.

Until quite recently evening was most trying to the European travelling in the bush. The evenings are very long; there is practically no twilight, and by half-past six darkness has fallen, and for working purposes the day is done. There may be a brilliant moonlight; if so, the natives will make full use of it and enjoy themselves with singing and dancing, the men beating the tom-toms while the women shake sehguras. They will sometimes go on all night, working themselves up to a pitch of excitement, which culminates in a general stampede round the town, conducted, however, with the greatest decorum and the absence of horse-play, which is unknown here. They rush round as a solid mass.

This often makes night hideous to the European, as it prevents his sleeping, but to the native it is the height of enjoyment. The wonder is that these people after such exertion are able to start away to the fields just after five the next morning when the day dawns.

In the native hut at night there was, before the railway brought up kerosene, no artificial light, except the log-fire in the centre. The people have a great horror of disasters from fire, and no wonder, as an entire village may be consumed in a few minutes. A crier striking the empty shell of a small tortoise with a short stick is often sent round the town in the evening warning the people to be careful. During the dry season, when the thatching ignites with the smallest spark, cooking will be carried on outside the hut, under the trees or down by the water-side.

There was no native illuminant up country, although nearer the coast raw palm-oil with a little bit of country cotton rolled into a wick was used, and gave a flicker of light.

In Freetown kerosene has been long known, and the Government official on his tours, for there were no other travellers in former days, would take a four-gallon tin up with him. If the tin did not leak when carried on his men's heads, which it usually did after a while, this supply would last him for some time, but only with the greatest economy, so he could allow himself a mere glimmer of light. On my recent tour I took as usual a tin of kerosene, a load for one man. After taking it a hundred miles or so overland and coming within the influence of the railway I arrived at the up-country town of Mendikama, which I have just mentioned as belonging to Mammy Lehu. There my servant came to me and said, "Massa, I been see kerosene na this town, and they can charge sixpence for gin-bottle of it."

Sure enough, on going with him to the little hut of an itinerating trader, I saw several small square-faced gin-bottles, each containing say three-quarters of a pint, for which I gladly paid sixpence, and was pleased to know that never again need I trouble myself to carry kerosene to that part of Upper Mendi, as I might depend upon having a good lamp and plenty of oil at a reasonable rate anywhere within touch of trade. This makes the wearisome evening a very different thing to the traveller; no longer need he sit in semi-darkness unable to do anything, with no companion except his own thoughts, until the time comes for him to throw himself upon his bed. His bed too is no longer, as in my earlier tours mine was, the usual native mud bed, but the delightful little "compactum," a portable bed weighing only 22 lbs., very strong, put together or taken down in a couple of minutes, which is now carried by most Europeans and which personally I have found to be a delightful improvement.

But the bright lamplight has its drawback, and when a drawback takes the form of an invasion of flying ants, it is most unpleasant.

At the town of Jowati, a place of some size that I came to,

a few miles from Mendikama, I was anxious to occupy a house as near the outskirt as possible in order that I might get what little breeze there might be. All the houses were inhabited, but the inmates of the one I selected courteously turned out that I might use it for the night that I intended staying there. This was no great difficulty or hardship, as the furniture merely consisted of a few thick logs, and it was surmised that I would pay in cash for the accommodation. I found it, however, so very tiny, that I had to have my little portable table put on the narrow verandah in front. When the time arrived for my evening repast, which consisted of capital curried fowl, country-rice, and tea, the flying ants, which I had not bargained for, attracted by my diminutive kerosene lamp, came around in such immense numbers that they became almost unbearable, continually flying into the dish of curry; and my teacup would have shared their attentions had I not had a small note-book handy to place over it every time I took a sip from it.

It is extraordinary how these annoying insects are attracted by a light; they seem literally to swarm about one. I have frequently in the Sherbro when sleeping with my doors open and a light burning, retired to rest with no sign of one in the room, but on rising in the morning the floor has been so covered with the wings of thousands of them, that my servants had to sweep them together with a broom and take them up by using their two hands as scoops. It is inconceivable where they all come from; and the manner in which they shed their wings and take their wingless bodies away is most curious, for only here and there is a body to be seen amongst the mountain of wings they have left behind them.

The travelling Mori or "bookman" is now much more frequently met with all over the country than formerly. Wherever you go you are sure to meet numbers of Moris. What they do is not definitely known to those outside their order, but ostensibly they are the purveyors of the written fetishes so much in vogue amongst those who can afford to buy them.

The chiefs especially are great believers in the Mori's

mysterious writings, or the charmed piece of paper that has on it a rude ink-drawing of a mosque or something which is intended to represent Mahomet's tomb, or bits of wood with a few lines of Arabic on them. All or any of these charms may be noticed hanging about a house, over a doorway, or suspended to rafters, but as these Mori-men are rarely, if ever, seen to be teaching the Mendi children anything, the question naturally arises as to whether this is really magic or whether under all there may not be some sinister and far deeper motive by which they are actuated. They have assuredly a very great hold on the people; and although I do not believe myself that the people would of themselves ever again attempt a repetition of the native rising of 1898, still we do know that fetish influence is paramount, and could be used were it again set in motion by means of the mysterious and secret "Uyira" Poro as was the case in the late rebellion.

Certain it is that in going through the country beyond the influence of the railway I was struck by the number of Mori-men I came across. Sometimes in a forest glade a little company of people in single file, headed by the Mori-men, would silently approach, pass, and disappear amongst the bush. Not a word would be spoken, and although my carriers would offer the usual compliments the others never seemed anxious to stop or enter into conversation.

Often the Mori-man's following would consist of three or four Mendi women, each carrying something on her head; a very large blue enamelled tea-pot invariably fell to the lot of one woman, another would have a "pan" box, a third an iron saucepan, while the rear would be brought up by two or three small boys "tooting" some article of domestic use, the last having on his head a little palm-leaf hamper of rice, beside which would be hanging a minute earthen pot containing the magician's ink, of his own making, while the writing board of silk-cotton-tree wood would be sure to be slung over the shoulders of one of the boys. The little party always looked very orderly and well-behaved, and there was nothing to indicate that they were anything more than the domestics of the Mori-man, but it was the constant meeting of these magicians in out-

of-the-way places, travelling about from town to town, that was apt to make one wonder if the sale of fetishes was alone answerable for the presence of these numerous Mohammedan priests to-day, when formerly it was quite a rarity to come across them while travelling in the bush. A chief used then to have perhaps one or even two in his town to "look ground" or to "cook war," but now their name seems to be legion; they are everywhere.

In a village near to the large town of Gigbehma in the Tunkia country I came upon a scene that seemed to throw some light on the working of the Mori-man through the "Hari" or dream medicine.

Upon arriving at the village of Komasu in the Tunkia country I came suddenly upon a gathering of women and girls sitting singing in the barri of the place. There were about a dozen of them, all dressed in gaily coloured prints with bright handkerchiefs around their heads; but their chief adornment was the garlands of the small "kani" fern with which their heads, necks, and bodies were festooned. I was anxious to know for what reason they had so bedecked themselves, as such a display of the "kani" is not usual without some very special reason. I therefore invited the ladies to entertain me by dancing and singing in the hope that by getting them into a very good humour I might stand a chance of coming to the bottom of things, or of hearing at all events as much as the sowehs or head-women of the Bundu, under whose care the girls were, might feel disposed to impart to me. In this I was not mistaken, for as the entertainment proceeded I was enabled to approach the sowehs and quietly tell them of my desire to know for what purpose they had brought out these Bundu girls with the "kani" garlands.

With a great show of mystery, they cautioned me as to the secrecy that was necessary if I were to be taken into their confidence. The reason could not possibly be explained to me except in presence of the principal women, but they would tell me all that they dared without violating the laws of their secret society if I would accompany them to their "medicine" house. Nothing loath I did so, and presently found myself inside a hut



MEMBERS OF THE BUNDU SECRET SOCIETY

After being "medicinally washed" out of the Bundu bush. The old style compared with the modern.

1901

one part of which was partitioned off and daubed all over with white, yellow, and black spots. I was attended by four of the sowehs, and here all alone they, in the most subdued voices, looking round all the while to see that we were not being overheard, told me that they were going about to various villages offering to all those women who desired to escape the affliction with which their own village had been overwhelmed, a certain specific in the form of a "medicine" which they were disposing of for a consideration. The name of the medicine was *Gehwor geh bau*, which literally meant "God help us." It came about in this way: a girl from the neighbouring village of Yandama had grown up to the age when she could be put into the Bundu, a secret society to which most young country girls are sent by their parents or guardians; but this young girl had not, as they expressed it, told her "daddy or her mammy," but had entered the institution surreptitiously of her own accord. The result was that shortly after this act of disrespect to her parents she died in the Bundu, and on the very same day the sowehe or head of the order died there also.

At the same town of Yandama there was a Mori-man, and some little irregularities on the part of his wife becoming known to him he so "worked his wife's head" that not only did she die, but the Mori-man as well.

At the same town they "killed" the Poro, a secret society for boys. The people of the town had been sending "chop" or food to the Poro boys while in the bush, when one of the boys died, also a woman who was of the order (a very rare occurrence when the woman is called a "Mabori") likewise died in the same Poro bush.

That so many deaths should take place, and in so strange and mysterious a manner, created great astonishment amongst the people, and they were entirely at a loss to account for it; they were also at their wits' ends as to what fetish should be invoked to prevent further loss of lives, when suddenly another Mori-man had a dream which he imparted to the people.

In this dream the girl who had died appeared to this Mohammedan, who was then, curiously enough, residing at

the very place where the girl had lived, and the apparition told the man that the Bundu women must make a "medicine" and then God would save them.

They had, these sowehs said, made the medicine, and they were then going from town to town selling it for the benefit of such as desired to obtain it, so that when next the Bundu was "pulled" no such disasters should happen again.

The "medicine" was simply, as they said, a certain leaf, that was shown to those who purchased, not the leaf itself, but its fetish influence, after which they were to go and look for the leaf in the bush and retain it as the fetish that was to befriend them.

In travelling through the country I have often come across people in stocks as a punishment, or to prevent them escaping; but at the village of Senahu, near to Queen Mammy Lehu's town of Mendikama in the Gaura country, I met, for the only time, a man and woman in banana stocks for another reason, which being quite unique to me, I asked permission to obtain a photograph of them, and here it is.

On my inquiring from them why they were stocked, they informed me that they were brother and sister, and that yesterday their sister Betti had died of "nuts" (glands), a very common complaint in this country. In order that the dead woman's spirit might not return to earth to trouble them and perhaps even take their lives, they had gone into stock, that morning, and would remain stocked until sunset, when the penance would be finished, and they might hope that nothing unpleasant would happen.

Although they gave me to understand that they had voluntarily stocked themselves, I cannot help thinking that they must have acted on the advice of the "medicine-man," who never loses an opportunity of playing upon the fears of his clients.

The stock in this instance consists of a short length of stout banana stem, through which a hole, to admit the foot, has been cut.

As everybody knows, the stem of the banana is so soft and

porous that it may easily be cut with a small pen-knife. It is very light, and becomes even lighter as the sap evaporates.

Observe that at both ends of the woman's stock there is a long cord, which she can sling over her shoulder when she wants to walk about, to relieve the tension. They were not compelled to stand all day.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MENDI MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

WIVES in Mendiland were formerly obtained in three ways:

By capture in war. By gift. By betrothal and the ordinary course of marriage.

The first method does not now apply as tribal wars are no longer permitted. The gift of girls by one big chief to another, and by others, has become unnecessary, owing to the altered circumstances of the chiefs and the people generally; the custom has therefore become practically obsolete.

Before the Protectorate was created, and while the country was ruled by native law, or what passed for it, internecine wars and slave-raiding expeditions were incessant, and a great many captives were of course taken. The young women and girls were amongst the most valued prizes, and from their number the captors and their friends selected such wives as they desired.

These wives were not then regarded in the light of slaves in the ordinary sense of the word, for any children they might bear were considered as free-born and entitled to many privileges, while children of "bought slaves," although enjoying certain advantages, were very apt to be looked down upon, and to be reminded unkindly in any warm discussion, that they were "born in the yard" and consequently inferior to the others.

Occasionally, when a chief or big man wishes to show some particular regard or esteem for an individual, or to recognise some service rendered, or to form some special alliance, the custom is, or rather was, until quite recently, to give a girl or daughter in marriage. This particular way of obtaining a wife differed from other methods inasmuch as it precluded the compulsory making of any betrothal presents; but a very

substantial *quid pro quo* was expected to be made by the recipient, either by rendering extraordinary service or in some other equally desirable manner. The gift of a chief's daughter being one of the greatest honours that can be bestowed, the acceptance of such a young wife is always followed by a lavish display of presents, which usually far exceeds what would have been given had the bride been wooed and won in the ordinary commonplace manner.

A girl may be betrothed at any age, practically as soon as she is born, if for any special reasons it is thought to be desirable.

When a man has fixed his affections on a girl whom he desires to make his wife, or an addition to his seraglio, he begins by deputing a small party of friends, one of whom must be a woman, to open negotiations. Perhaps the woman is one of his own wives, and the man or men, who will probably be relatives, call upon the girl's parents or guardians. The first thing they will do will be to present two or more kola nuts, or they may offer a "ship-head" of American tobacco—that is, a head of tobacco as it is taken out of the imported hogshead, accompanied by a bottle of rum. All this ceremony is to denote that the party has come upon an important matter and is anxious to have an interview.

The interview being accorded, it is the custom to open up the subject by making a present of some small article of female attire, usually an imported Madras handkerchief for tying round the head, at the same time making some such remark as: "We see a beautiful gem in your house and we come to get it; we bring this present for her."

If the girl is old enough to make her choice of a husband the present is shown to her and the object of the visit is told her. If her affections have not already been bestowed she may agree to accept the offering, which is tantamount to consenting to an engagement with a man whom she may not have seen. On the other hand she may have been receiving attentions from a lover who from time to time has made her numerous presents, but such gifts count for nothing, they would never be recognised in native law as in any way establishing an engagement. When a betrothal takes place the presentation

of the handkerchief or some other thing is obligatory, and shows that the consent of the girl has been properly obtained. Should it so happen that unpleasantness arises after marriage and the suit is brought into the country-court and a return of the presents is considered, these pre-betrothal gifts will not be taken into account at all.

The girl having accepted the man's orthodox offering will make a return present. The way is now clear to treat with the parents or guardians, which is a much more expensive matter, as what is called "wine-money" has to be paid or arranged for.

Wine-money has no fixed value, but as a matter of course the bigger the wine-money the greater is the hold upon the woman in case she might want to change her mind and break off her engagement. Nominally "a head of money," £3, is what should be paid; but a smaller or larger sum may be accepted according to the peculiar circumstances of the case.

Additional amounts may be added to the wine-money if additional privileges are required; as, for instance, if it is desired not only that the man should marry the girl, but that, in the event of his dying, the girl should remain married to his family for her lifetime. Should her own husband die, she would then become the wife of a relative of his. Without this "life-marriage" arrangement the widow would not be bound to remain in the family of her deceased husband, although she might be won over to do so by presents, or by kindly solicitations at the time of the festivities at the "keeping the burying."

Returning to the parents and the "wine-money." It of course not infrequently happens that it is inconvenient to find the equivalent immediately; in that case a small present, of no fixed value, is given to the parents, with such words as:

"With this present we stop your ears, that you may not listen to any proposals that may be made by others for this girl."

Some other persons may add something to the small present, it may be a bottle of rum or some tobacco, saying:



NATIVE POTTERY
Specimens of up-country pottery, Mendiland.

VOLUNTARY "STOCKS"

This is not a punishment, but a penance voluntarily undertaken, in this case to prevent the soul of a deceased relative returning to annoy them. The stocks are made from the soft stem of the banana, and are worn from sunrise to sunset.

1870

"We also bind this girl fast; we are determined to secure her."

The reply from the parents may be:

"We hear what you say; we wait to see what you will do."

These presents being accepted, the girl is then considered as properly betrothed. The intermediaries may wish to take the affianced bride to their home that the bridegroom-elect as well as his relatives may see her. In that case another little present is made, to the equivalent of a shilling or so, with the remark:

"We ask that you will allow this girl to go with us, that our families may see her."

A girl may, with perfect propriety, be trained in the home or family of the future husband after she has been formally betrothed, even before the "wine-money" has been paid, but until that part of the obligation has been carried through she would never be recognised as having been legally married. She may after a while refuse to be married; in that case the presents would be returned. The paying of the "wine-money" is the final settlement of the marriage compact; when that is done the bridegroom can claim his bride, and she will be delivered to him when he is ready to receive her.

A woman is not considered to have been married in accordance with the country custom if no "wine-money" has been paid, and its non-payment may, subsequently, be the means of creating much unpleasantness where the children of such a marriage are concerned in the distribution of property or in succession.

This was very clearly demonstrated to me once at a great meeting which I had convened to determine the rightful successor to a deceased paramount chief, when no less than three aspirants to the chieftaincy were brought forward, one being the son of an elderly woman who was present, and who personally advocated her son's claim. The great chiefs of the localities interested in the election were all there, and they clearly showed to this woman that the claim of her son could not for a moment be sustained, for the simple reason that she had never been married to her husband in accordance with the

customs of the country, no "wine-money" having been paid by her deceased husband, which rendered her son illegitimate and disqualified him for the chieftaincy. I became acquainted, at that most interesting meeting, with many native laws of great importance, which were brought to my notice by the chiefs as they discussed the relative merits of the claimants; this indeed is the only real way to gain an authoritative knowledge of their unwritten laws. The question of legitimacy was clearly demonstrated for my own edification and that of the concourse of people who attended. It was stated that if a man had numerous wives for all of whom "wine-money" had been properly paid, all the children had the same legal status; but where that custom had not been complied with, any issue from such irregular alliance was rendered illegitimate and the neglect affected their position, as in the instance then under review.

It is quite an unusual thing for any Mendi woman to bring proceedings against her husband for divorce, although she can of course do so in the country-court if she desires; but matters of this kind are usually kept as much from publicity as possible, and when disagreements take place they are generally talked over before members of the respective families quietly indoors and are known as "house palavers."

If the husband becomes tired of his loving spouse, or has formed another attachment, or from some unknown cause wishes to sever the marriage tie without there being any justification for it on the part of the wife, as a rule she will submit to disentangle herself from the man who no longer wants her society, merely stipulating that certain farm products, or any property she may possess, may be given over to her. But if she is a woman of importance, knowing the injustice of the proceeding, and that if she is not publicly vindicated it may injure her good name in the eyes of the people, she would refer the matter to the chief, or even, if necessary, to the paramount chief. Her relatives would back her up and would not hesitate to expend money in country legal proceedings in order to clear her character, and bring the onus of the separation upon the husband, at the same time obtaining redress for the

opprobrium from which she may have suffered, and the restitution of any goods and chattels which have been provided by her. The case is somewhat different when the fault is on the other side; when the wife takes herself off and leaves her husband. As soon as the discovery is made, the injured man goes to her family and demands the return of the woman. If she refuses to comply, his suspicions are aroused that all is not as it should be, and that there is another somebody behind the scene. He immediately causes inquiries to be made, and if his prognostications are verified, satisfaction is demanded from the co-respondent, and the wife, or her people, are compelled to return to the husband all that he paid for her, and in some parts of the country double the amount has to be restored.

Where the case has been taken into the country-court and determined in the husband's favour, the wife's family is put to considerable expense, and sometimes the amount is so burdensome to them, especially where large presents had been given at the time of the marriage, that they prefer to compound the damages by furnishing another wife from the family, but that wife must not be a sister.

A word or two here on *saraka*. *Saraka* is a fetish specific supplied for some special cause, such as pregnancy or its absence. Practically it can be obtained for any purpose upon payment, and it assumes the most varied forms. It may be applied to a person of either sex, to a chief or a commoner, putting that person under some unpleasant restraint or inconvenience, such as stocking. It may be a piece of white or blue cloth tied round the stem of a large tree which is very often seen; or it may be a bunch of "medicine" depending from the boughs of a tree, or a large suspended stone, or a cloth spread over a pathway; it all rests upon the whim and fancy of the medicine-man who is prescribing the treatment, what form the *saraka* will take. But no one can go about the country, or pass through the native towns and *fakais*, or go through rice and cassada farms, without constantly seeing *saraka* in some shape or other.

A house is often noticed encircled by a country vine which

is sometimes taken right across a fakai and left lying upon the ground; this is a saraka against fire.

One of the oldest, and to me the most interesting of the native industries, is the fashioning of a light grey substance resembling clay, which is found on the banks of some of the streams and waterways, into articles of domestic use, many of which, as will be seen in the picture, are of considerable size.

Pottery-making is quite a native art, like the weaving of country-cloths, being frequently an hereditary accomplishment. This picture is a very typical one, and its interest is further enhanced by my having come upon the scene at the rather important town of Falaba, which is midway between Bandasuma on the Wanjuh (or Kittam) and Bandasuma on the Sulima (or Moa), quite unexpectedly when those engaged in the work were busily occupied in the process.

The *modus operandi* is to place a block of this clay upon a stout slab cut from the spur of a silk-cotton-tree, when the women well pound it with long wooden pestles, which, with the addition of a little water, brings it to a workable consistency. A rough piece of flat well-wetted wood serves as a potter's wheel, the clay as it is shaped being revolved upon it.

In this instance an entire barri is devoted to pottery-making. When I looked on there were three women and two pretty little girls in the barri. These little pickins were so extremely like the younger of the women that I inquired if they were hers, and with pride she said that they were. There are many Gallinas people in this town, and that tribe is noted for the pleasing and handsome features of the gentler sex as well as for the blackness and delicate texture of the skin. These children began the work by roughly shaping a piece of the clay into a small block, and making a hole in it of sufficient size to allow the thumb to act as a pivot. The block was then passed in this preliminary stage to one of the women, who added to it, and shaped it with her hands until the article was finished, when it was placed in the sun to harden.

In the case of very large beakers, the lower half is made one day and the upper part the next day. The women had no patterns or sizes to go by, everything was built according

to fancy; the only implements used were the fingers, two or three pieces of broken calabash, as scrapers, and a small piece of rag.

The articles shown have no device or mark upon them, but others that I saw had crinkled lines, after the style of a rope, as a sort of decoration running round. These ornamentations, I observed, were produced by rolling a short piece of stranded palm-fibre, resembling coarse string, over the soft clay when the article was, with the exception of the embellishing, finished. The impression was very quickly and clearly defined, and a set-off was also given to the rim by making a few raised lines around it, which was done by simply drawing a hard Calabar bean over it as many times as lines were required. This particular bean has an open divisional line, which leaves a raised line resembling a steel worm.

To me this was all most interesting and gave rise to thoughts as to what inventive genius may not possibly be lying undeveloped in the native mind; although with the introduction of the inexpensive enamelled ware and cheap tin bowls now flooding the Mendi country, there seems to be little likelihood of any expansion in the native pottery industry, but rather, with the advance of trade, the industry may soon be extinguished and relegated to the past.

The clay after drying in the sun darkens in colour considerably, the larger pitchers are very heavy and easily broken, but with care will last for years. The symmetry of the native-made pottery is to me remarkable, considering that all is done by the eye and hand.

Two of the women saying they were sickly and unsightly (which was perfectly true) did not wish me to include them in the photograph, so they all cleared away when the camera was produced, although one of these ladies may be indistinctly seen reclining in the open verandah of a house near by, looking on at my operations.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BUNDU ORDER. THE SECRET SOCIETY FOR WOMEN

IN the Mendi country sometimes when travelling in the bush the stillness will be broken by the sound of a peculiarly weird chant that denotes that a Bundu bush is not far off. The great order for women and girls is the Bundu. It is an absolutely secret organisation, the innermost workings of which it seems quite impossible for those outside the order, either man or woman, to know anything about.

There is a general belief that the initiates undergo some form of circumcision, but I have never been able to obtain any authentic information as to what really takes place. It is, however, certain from the secrecy that is maintained and the absolute impossibility of gleaning any reliable particulars, that the "medicine" upon which the girls are sworn when becoming members of the order, must be of the most terrifying description, to compel them to keep the vows which are enforced upon them.

Whatever this influence may be, the Bundu, if mentioned at all, is always referred to with the greatest awe by all natives of either sex.

The corresponding order for men and boys is the "Poro," but the laws of the country will not allow a Bundu to be in session at the same time as a Poro in one chief's jurisdiction. Here we see an opening for woman's rights, as a Bundu must always give way to a Poro.

Bundu girls when passing through the bush must not speak to any men. If men are within sight of any of them the girls must cover their heads, and if unable to avoid meeting them on the road they must turn their backs upon them.



A MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Bundu devils, on the left, waiting to receive presents from the husbands elect of the Bundu initiates.



A SECRET SOCIETY

A Poro boy in dancing costume, Gaura country, Upper Mendiland

SECRET SOCIETY FOR WOMEN 221

When it is proposed to open a Bundu, a place for concealment is cleared in a secluded spot in the bush near to the town to which the Bundu is affiliated. This is known as the "Bundu bush," and from the moment of its formation is the most sacred place in the country.

Although there may be many young girls within it with only a few of the elders as their custodians, they are absolutely safe against the intrusion of any man. No man would under any consideration venture to approach the "Bundu bush," for the mystic workings of the "Bundu medicine" upon any delinquent are believed to be exceedingly severe; and this belief is so firmly rooted in the minds of all men that Bundu girls when under the protection of the Bundu medicine can walk about unattended within bounds, knowing that they are perfectly secure from the smallest molestation.

When a Bundu first begins, and the intonation, which especially belongs to the Bundu order, is heard in the stillness of the early morning, the effect is weird and strange, and it is an intimation that parents may now present their girls for initiation into the order.

From information I succeeded in obtaining from the daughter of a chief, herself a woman of this order, it would appear that the first thing done to the initiates is to give to them their Bundu name, by which hereafter they are to be known. These names are given according to their order of entering that particular Bundu, but they apply to all Bundus, hence the enormous numbers of girls and women of the same names. They run from one onwards consecutively: Kehma, Tauloma, Bandi, Jassa, Soko, Nama, Digbeh, Kehma, Branga, Moi, Jusu, Yoko, &c. After receiving her name each novice is whitened over with a clay wash, given a sumptuous feed of rice, and is finely dressed in a country-cloth wrapped around her lower limbs, with a "buba" or short jumper on the body. The novices sleep in the barri of the Bundu for three nights, the days being given over to dancing by all in the Bundu bush. They are well fed all the time, food being supplied by their future husbands, their parents, or guardians.

While I was staying at the town of Juru in the Gaura

country there was a Bundu in session in the bush outside the town, when the soweh or head woman at the request of the chief very kindly brought the initiates out of their sacred retreat to an open space on the road, in order that I might take a photograph of them. The clothing was of course of the scantiest, and what there was was all of imported stuff. The chief adornments were the fetishes peculiar to the order, consisting of several ropes of country-cane, cut into pipe-shaped beads of about an inch long, and either coloured with the brown dye of anatto seeds, or chequered by burning, while around one shoulder were strings of plaited palm-fibre, from which hung numerous fibre tassels, and from the other shoulder three short rows of seeds which had been bored and filled with a "medicine" of the Bundu order. Loin-cloths and headkerchiefs completed the dressing, the arms and legs being daubed over lightly with a washing of white clay.

The girls were brought out by some of the duennas, and being still in the Bundu bush were unable to enter the town, which would have been contrary to the stringent laws of the society.

The girls were marched into line and began their peculiar chants, which are of the quaintest kind but are always rendered in perfect harmony, the sounds seeming to come as from one voice instead of from the eleven which were before me. There are no shakes or trills, the monotony is only broken by short gentle movements of the arms and by occasional clapping of the hands, the whole usually ending by a smart single clap which has a fine effect in the quietude of the bush.

This long row of young girls then prostrated themselves upon the ground in a supplicating attitude with arms upstretched and hands clasped, and in that position they sang their morning and evening hymns in the Mendi language. It was an extraordinary sight, and although, to our civilised thinking, it was what we are pleased to describe as barbaric, I can only say that to me it was a most impressive service, and was certainly regarded by the initiates as a serious ceremony. They were under the most complete control, most obedient to their superiors, behaving in the most decorous way throughout, so



AFTER LEAVING THE BUNDU
Modern style.

U of M

1701

much so indeed that I gazed upon that small band of children, for they were all under sixteen years of age, with considerable interest; and I could not help wondering what their future would be when "The morning light should break and the darkness disappear." But who is to bring them the light?

At the conclusion my thanks and offerings followed, and I witnessed the departure of the girls with their custodians into the dense forest to return to their isolated encampment, which is as secure and sacred from the outside world as it is possible to be.

The girls may remain in their place of concealment for a few months, when they will be "medicinally washed" with great ceremony, and the Bundu session will be at an end.

I happened to be visiting a paramount chief when this ceremony of "pulling from the Bundu" was to take place in a few days' time; but as I could not remain so long and had never witnessed it, the chief consulted with the head sowehe, who arranged that the function should begin as soon as possible, in order that I might see it before my departure.

The notification to the town that the washing was to take place was made that same evening. The devils, to the number of four, were out the entire night, rushing round the town with every available person—men, women, and children; the place was turned into a perfect pandemonium, and every time I woke up the racket and noise was still going on. It began about eight o'clock and concluded at dawn, or, as it is termed, "when the door clean."

The next afternoon the first part of the ceremony was begun by sixty or seventy women, all carrying branches or clusters of leaves, entering the town behind five Bundu devils, who were preceded by several sowehs, or women of the highest degree in the order, readily distinguishable by their having white cloth wound turban-fashion around their heads.

As this was a big occasion they had some assistant sowehs, who wore parti-coloured turbans. Music was furnished by the sehgyras, to the shaking of which all the followers sang out lustily their quaint chants while parading the town.

Civilisation is making strides even in this most secret of

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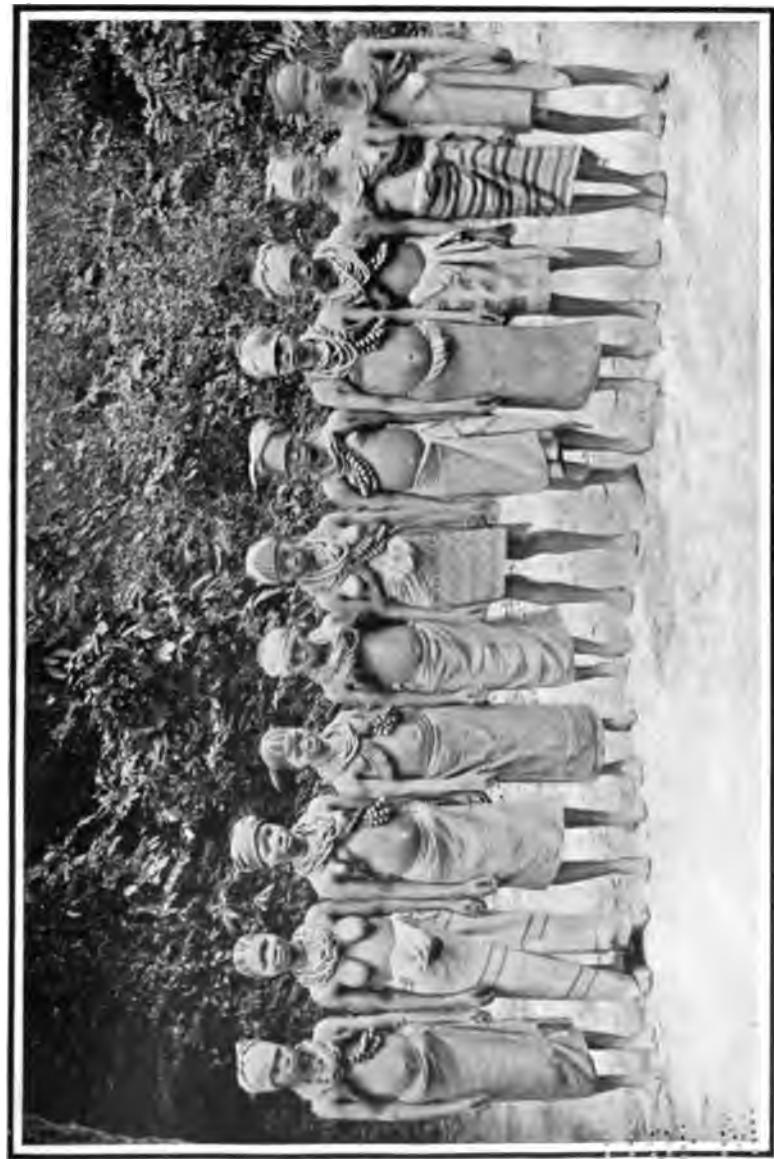
native societies, for whereas formerly only country-cloth was used for leggings sewn up at the feet (as no portion of the flesh may be visible), to-day some of the devils may be seen wearing tan-coloured stockings peeping above the lace-up black boots or tan shoes which many of them now affect.

I must admit that these modern things do not harmonise with the bulky fibrous costume, and considerably detract from the characteristic effect of this barbarous dress with which so much fetish and mystery is associated.

Five empty gin-cases were produced and placed in the form of a crescent on the ground, upon which the five devils clothed in this curious fibrous costume sat. Over the lower part of the dress was unrolled before each devil a palm-leaf mat which reached to the waist, the unused portion being drawn out on the ground in front. The devils sat in perfect quiet awaiting the offerings which were to be presented to them by the husbands-elect of the girls in return for the four months they had spent with the initiates in the Bundu bush. A heterogeneous collection of things was soon placed before the sowehs who were sitting near the devils, consisting of demi-johns of rum, bottles of gin, leaf-tobacco, country-cloths, and many other articles.

The lighter presents were first carried to the particular bride-elect for whom they were intended, who looked at them disdainfully without touching them. They were then placed in front of the sowehs, as were all the offerings at this ceremony, although ostensibly belonging to the girls. In a short time considerable quantities of wedding gifts strewed the ground, as of course at so public a function the bridegrooms vied with one another in their munificence, constantly adding and adding to their offerings.

Not all of the maidens had been asked in marriage, some being too young. Later on their turn would come, no doubt; they certainly did not look more depressed than those who were betrothed, for there was a general absence of smiles, the behaviour of the whole of them being very solemn. The devils sat absolutely motionless, the only real activity being amongst the sowehs who were scooping in the gifts.



FEMALE SECRET SOCIETY

Initiates of the Bundu Order in the bush near Juru, Gaura Country, Mendiland.

1950

During this time the followers moved back, allowing the young girls who were to be "medicinally washed out" of the Bundu to come into view. Each of the girls wore a long white robe, which was girdled at the waist, the upper part of the body being covered with a washing of white clay.

The whole rite was barbaric, but the girls being all garbed alike there was a uniformity about it that made it look ceremonious, and it was all conducted with much decorum.

A sixth devil, who appeared to be rather skittish inclined, sat alone and was now and again admonished for her hilarity, one or two of the other devils striking her with the twigs they carried. She seemed to be what they locally termed "funny," as she adorned her fibrous costume with all kinds of oddments in the way of shells, and was altogether a very peculiar young person, although she was certainly a favourite with the people generally.

Her great desire was to get up to me, which after a time she succeeded in doing by a series of spasmodic gyrations in which she was distinctly encouraged by the crowd. Dancing up at last she informed me that she was hungry and wanted food. That no doubt was only a ruse to obtain from me a bright new shilling, but after receiving it she was immediately pounced upon and the money taken from her closed fist. She continued to dance before me for a few moments, and was then borne along by the Bundu party and the crowd.

Later on, about five o'clock, the town was entered by four sowehs carrying a mysterious "something" that was covered by a white country-cloth over some coloured ones. This mysterious something was the great fetish medicine called the "Kendu," which forms the essential part of the Bundu order. It has to be paraded around the town preparatory to the ablutionary operations taking place the same evening in order that the ladies may be properly dressed to appear in public on the following morning.

Four kambeks, who are in the second degree of the order, were in waiting, and they immediately received the "Kendu" medicine from the sowehs and hoisted it up.

A procession of the women of the town was then formed,

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and to the shaking of the sehguras, their favourite musical instrument, they danced and sang behind the kambeks who were carrying the fetish medicine during their progress round the town. Upon retiring to the original starting-point the medicine was delivered back by the kambeks to the sowehs in as ceremonious a manner as they had received it from them. Having received it, the sowehs immediately went off with it to some unknown place as secretly as they had come, the women remaining and keeping up the singing and dancing for awhile, ceasing only when it was time to prepare for the great jubilation which was to follow later, when the ceremony of "pulling from the Bundu bush" would turn the town into a perfect bedlam.

No Bundu devils were present, as it is contrary to the laws of the society that they should be present at the parade of this fetish medicine.

When the girls are brought out of the "Bundu bush" that encampment is known as "Panguma," and when shown in the town, just before the "washing," the procession is called "Tifek," from the leaves which the women followers carry on that occasion. After that exhibition is over the girls do not return to "Panguma" but proceed to another part of the bush named "Bundi"; thence they are taken to the road, where they receive their "Soboro" or "devil cap," which consists of plastering a quantity of black mud over their heads.

Subsequently they are marched to the water-side to wash off the devil cap, which is medicinally prepared, and with this operation the initiates have completed their course within the Bundu and are full members of the order.

Only those who have been betrothed have their devil caps washed from the medicine; the others do not wear the cap, but their faces are washed with the Bundu medicine. If any Bundu unwashed girl has any illicit intercourse after leaving the Bundu, that medicine will "catch" the man and give him a sickness which only the Bundu sowehs can cure.

When an unwashed girl becomes engaged she must return to the Bundu bush to wear the devil cap and be medi-



THE BELLE OF THE BUNDU

In the procession of girls, after being "medicinally washed" or "pulled" from the Bundu bush, holding the hand of her husband-elect, to whom, after three days' time, she will be handed over.

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cinally washed and dressed by the *sowehs* in the clothes provided by her parents or husband-elect, after which she will be presented to him with native ceremony.

On the occasion I am describing, the next morning the girls attended by *sowehs*, *kambehs*, devils, *sehgura*-players, and a host of people paraded the town, the "belle" sitting upright in a canopied hammock in modern attire, and wearing a large white straw hat over her bright silk handkerchief. The scene was naturally extremely effective but did not last long, and concluded by the escorting of the girls to the *barri* prepared for them, where they were given over to the elderly women to be properly cared for during their short residence there.

Before leaving the town, the same morning I was conducted by the chief to this *barri*, in which the ladies were to remain for three nights before receiving their freedom.¹ They are permitted during that period to walk out in the daytime to see their friends and to receive presents, but they must be careful not to stay too long or their parents or guardians will be mulcted in fines, which will have to be paid before they are allowed to re-enter the sanctum. The *barri* had been tastefully decorated with some of the very finest old country-cloths that I have ever seen; they were a pleasure to behold, and reminded me of past times. Such large and elaborately hand-worked cloths are not now to be obtained, as the choice country-grown cotton and the subdued tints of the vegetable dyes are giving place to imported yarns of harsh and crudely bright colours, as distasteful to the eye as the others were inviting.

That, however, is in the march of trade and the creating of new wants, so with this small digression, I will hark back to the *barri*, into which had been brought tables with fancy coverings where jugs of water and tumblers were placed. Sofas were standing about upon which the young maidens were reclining, all attired in their best, some wearing bright-

¹ After the three nights have passed the entire ceremony is finished, and the girls are at liberty to leave, but those who are affianced are given over to their husbands.

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coloured gowns, with fine silk handkerchiefs around their heads, and generally displaying an immense profusion of long country-worked silver chains, silver combs, and numerous silver-mounted ram's horns and large fetish silver plaques slung by more heavy silver chains around their necks. They were attended by duennas, some of whom might be seen sitting by the side of these recumbent damsels, gently fanning them with a cheap imported fan, while a little knot of lady singers gave out their melodious though somewhat monotonous strains to the rattlings of the sehgura-players.

The whole scene was such as I had not previously witnessed, the careless attitudes these gaily gowned young women continually assumed, their stolid and smileless features, the adoration that they were receiving from those surrounding them, and the *tout ensemble*, produced a strange but pleasing effect, and with genuine feelings of regret I took my leave of the chief and his people, for his town was full of old and, to the native mind, cherished time-honoured associations and deeply venerated ancestral customs.

The illustration next shown is from a photograph I was so fortunate as to be allowed to take at a town nearer the coast, of a bevy of young girls who were taking advantage of the three days' privilege, and who paid me a visit. It will be noticed what a feature the umbrella has become and what civilised clothing these girls are wearing. Here the lavish display of massive silver ornaments is very clearly seen, and one of them has a little bunch of leopard teeth depending from her right shoulder, a sign that she is free-born. The silver plaques of course have some writing from the Koran within them obtained from some Mohammedan priest. These costumes are exceptionally good, and were, moreover, seen at a town near to some trading factories, where the services of a Sierra Leone seamstress could be brought into requisition, otherwise they would have been more in accordance with the photograph given earlier depicting the two styles which I call ancient and modern. To my way of thinking the old style appears more in keeping with the Bundu mysteries.



BUNDU INITIATES

In supplicating position. The bodies of these girls, after being covered by a thin washing of clay, are striped by the fingers of a duenna or an initiate being drawn over them while the mixture is wet.

Ardu

With this chapter I give two photographs of Mendi games, one taken in Upper Mendi, the other on the coast.

SE. This is a gambling game popular among the Upper Mendis. A mat is placed upon the ground, by which the players sit as at a game of Bridge.

The mat is divided into four service courts when four are playing; No. 1 playing diagonally into No. 2, while No. 3 does the same into No. 4. The game consists in each player spinning with the fingers a kind of small whipping-top, said to be shaped from a piece of elephant bone (*Herre gare*). Dexterously the tops are set going at the same time, each player hoping that when the tops collide his own will knock one or all of those of his opponents off the mat, when he will win from the man whose top has been displaced. In the upper parts of the country, native-grown tobacco was generally gambled for, but now that cash is so plentiful actual money is planked down; but formerly, amongst those who could afford to do so human beings were staked and played for.

JIGGE. This is played with four cowrie shells, the convex tops of which have been cut off. One of the players takes the four shells, throws them up with a dexterous twist, clicking his first and second fingers as the shells leave his hands. The shells fall upon the mat which has been spread on the ground; if they fall with two tops or two bottoms up it is a win, all tops or the reverse are also a win, but three tops or the reverse are a lose. Jigge is a terribly gambling game, and half-a-dozen persons or more can play at it, each taking a turn.

KE is a much more scientific game than the others, and is very similar to our game of draughts, the board being a flat piece of solid wood marked out in black and white squares. The pieces are the small conical excrescences that cover the trunks of some of the large trees, and are in two sizes, the large ones being called the men, the others the women. The moves are almost identical with draughts. This game, although met with throughout the Mendi country, is not so frequently seen as WARRE, which is *par excellence*

the principal game throughout Mendi, but, like Ke, it is only a two-man game.

The game of Warre is without a doubt the game of all games for the Mendi people, and indeed so fascinating is it that one may, even in Freetown, frequently see a Sierra Leonean, who has been much in the Mendi country, playing the game with a Mendi; for now in that city the Mendis (and other tribes) so overrun the place that there is no difficulty in finding an opponent. A Mendi man will have a game at Warre whenever the opportunity offers; it seems to be part and parcel of his existence.

Warre is a real game of skill. It is played on a small board cut out of a solid block of wood of about eighteen inches long by seven wide, and the depth is so carved that it resembles a whaler or surf-boat standing upon a broad pedestal, the two ends of the boat being further hollowed to receive the counters of beans as they are won during the game.

On the top of the board are six holes on each side, a couple of inches or so in diameter, which are called towns, each town being garrisoned by four war-boys usually represented by beans. Occasionally, however, the beans give place to a small hollow bean-shaped counter of native iron made by a country blacksmith; but only the chiefs or big men can afford these counters, as they are expensive and not readily obtainable.

The twelve towns being occupied by their proper complement of war-boys, it is the object of one belligerent party to "eat up" the other. The war opens by a player denuding one of his towns of its four soldiers and strengthening four of his other towns by the addition of one man, or at the start he may strengthen any one of his towns by the addition of his whole four soldiers. His adversary then plays on the opposite side in a similar manner. After the start is made all future moves must be forward, that is, the player must always work his men to the right, he cannot fill up his towns to the left, so he very soon finds that some of his towns are becoming overcrowded, which is an advantage, and in clearing them



A NATIVE-MADE LEOPARD TRAP IN THE BUSH OUTSIDE THE TOWN OF GORN,
MANDO COUNTRY

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at the opportune moment, he will have to overstep his own side and increase the denuded towns of his enemy.

After the lead off, every other move must clear its own town, and only one bean can be deposited in each hole, so that it may happen that by rapid accumulations of men a single town may contain fifteen or sixteen beans, which sooner or later will have to be moved, and if skilfully arranged for, should be to the benefit of the player.

Supposing hole number five had after a while fifteen beans in it, it follows that when that town was clear the beans would have been deposited in the one remaining town on the player's side, continued over the adversary's six towns, returned over the player's five towns and finished up at the third town of his opponent. The town denuded is not to receive a bean should the quantity be sufficient to overtake it, it is to be skipped, and the next town played into, consequently the player's side only received five instead of six beans, therefore one hole plus six on opposite side, plus five on player's side, plus three on the enemy's side made up the full quantity of fifteen beans. Should the last bean fall into a town guarded by not more than two soldiers they will be captured, as also any preceding towns to it guarded in a similar manner, the captives being removed and placed in the side guard-room at the end of the Warre board.

The idea is so to accumulate men in one of your own towns or a couple of towns, that by-and-by you will be able to deal them round in such a manner that the last three or four beans may probably fall into the towns of your enemy protected by either one or by two men, when all such men will become your prisoners and thus make your chance of winning the game extremely good. The game continues until the armies are both so reduced that no move remains on either side, the victorious player being the one who has taken most prisoners.

It is an excellent game, full of strategic movements, and good players will show much tact and forethought while at the same time moving with a quickness that is surprising even to the European ; and frequently in a long hand the last three

beans will, with a practised twist of the wrist, be deposited simultaneously in their several towns.

Amongst the numerous fetish customs in vogue at the present time is the important one known as the "Para Kotu" or medicine-stone, which is supposed to possess supernatural powers in the healing of wounds, and in curing the sick who may be affected by its influences.

Para is a Mendi word and signifies medicine, Kotu is always understood to mean a very hard stone, of the description of ironstone, with which the country abounds, and for fetish purposes is usually placed just outside a town or village.

The illustration shows two of these fetish stones which I discovered in the bush near to a small village between Sulima and Mano Salija; as will be seen, they were resting on the ground at the foot of the trunk of a tree, concealed by the surrounding shrubby foliage.

Persons believing in the dangerous properties of this fetish and its baneful effects are particularly cautious not to do anything which might arouse its displeasure, such as the sharpening of any knife or matchet upon the stone, or the throwing water upon it, and so on, as all fetishes are extremely sensitive, and are supposed to punish severely those careless or disrespectful persons who neglect to observe that proper regard for mystic customs which all fetishes exact and which they require to be most scrupulously observed. Failing such observance, those so offending may look for some illness or affliction to overtake them very speedily.

The Para comprises three sections, the Ma-Pa, the stone on the left, the Fondor-Pa, the one placed on the right, and the Pa-Yera when the two stones are placed together.

The people who officiate are called the Para-Moi or Para men. They, of course, are members of the Para order, which has nothing whatever to do with the great Poro fetish order for men, common throughout the country, and which is not a medicinal institution. The Para Kotu is entirely distinct, having no connection with any other order.

The Para medicine is believed to affect people by inflicting upon them wounds or cuts, or some sudden pain, or an attack



THE BUNDU ORDER

A group of girls with fetish "medicine" hanging over the right shoulders, and in the grape-like clusters of seeds on the tops of the high coiffures. Observe also the "dressing" or "wojeh" upon the foreheads.

1894

of fever, or bad pains in the head, or in the case of women lengthy labour, and many other troubles.

To discover whether any person, man or woman, is under the fetish influence of, and is suffering from the effects of the Para medicine, a Tortor Beh Mor or "country-fashion" man is consulted, and if he expresses the opinion that such sickness is attributable to this fetish, the Para-Moi will be at once informed. Generally this accommodating but necessary individual resides in the same town or village to which the Para stone is affiliated.

But if it should so happen that there is no Para stone belonging to the town where the afflicted person resides, some other town having the "medicine" will be resorted to, and the Para-Moi will be requested to remove the patient to wherever the stone may be.

After the Para-Moi has been consulted he will, the same evening, go to the stone, taking with him the two halves of a split kola-nut, then holding them in his right hand and a cup of cold water in the other hand, he will stoop low before the stone and say, "Pabla sena fondor, fondor, eh!" This is repeated and he begins to relate that such a person is sick, and that the country-fashion man has said that the stone had caught him, and if that is so let it answer through the two half kola-nuts.

He then throws them on to the stone, from which they will roll off on to the ground; if they fall with the divided sides uppermost, that is a clear answer that the person is under the Para influence, but if only one divided side is uppermost it is convincing proof that the person is not so affected.

If the patient is by this means shown to be suffering from the Para, the following morning he or she will be brought before the stone, after of course paying the entrance fee of one cloth to the chief Para-Moi.

Then he, with some other members of the same order, will gather round the stone with the sick person, having with them some cooked rice in a pot with some dried fish which has been cooked with palm-oil.

The chief Para man will obtain from the patient a live

fowl, also two needles and a country-made razor, that is, a small knife exceedingly sharp.

He will then take the sick patient by the hand, and he will place his right foot upon the right foot of the Para-Moi, while the chief Para-Moi will say the usual words, "Pabla sena fondor, fondor, eh!" and all will respond with one long-drawn-out "Eh——!"

The Para man will next proceed to move his right foot and that of the sick person to the stone, doing the same with the left foot, afterwards he will turn round and sit on the stone, presently he will arise and hold the patient by the body and repeat the Pabla formula, those around replying with the long-drawn "Eh—" The sick person then sits on the stone, stretching out his legs and arms. Some uncooked rice is placed upon his feet and upon his hands, and the fowl is held near to the rice, when it naturally proceeds to pick up the grains with amazing rapidity. During this operation, the Pabla is being constantly repeated; the patient then protrudes his tongue, and uncooked rice is put upon it, and also on to his head. The fowl is again brought into requisition and the rice speedily disappears to the accompaniment of the Pabla chanting. But should it so happen that the appetite of the fowl fails, and it obstinately refuses to perform its proper functions of picking up the rice, then all hope has gone, for it is convincing proof that the sick person is beyond medicinal aid, that recovery is impossible, and that death will ensue. Should the fowl eat up the rice, however, there is good hope of recovery.

A bowl containing mashed leaves in some water is now placed near, the Para man will take up the fowl by the legs and dip it into the decoction, using the feathered creature as a charmed sprinkler by which to spray the water over the patient, while the Pabla is repeated three times.

The Para man next turns his attention to the two needles, one of which he will hand to an assistant, who, with himself, will have three small leaves upon which is put a little palm-oil; the patient is then requested to thrust forward his tongue again, which will be scraped by each into the leaf. The leaf



BUNDU DEVILS

At the town of Gorn, Mando Country, Upper Mendi. The costumes worn by these devils are of fibre; masks conceal their faces, and continuations of country-woven cloth cover their legs and feet, modernized frequently by boots or tan-coloured shoes, for no part of their skin must be seen.

1700

is then deftly thrown behind the patient. This is repeated three times, always to the strains of the Pabla, then similar operations will follow with the razor.

With the completion of these attentions the remainder of the leafy liquid is supplied to the patient in which to wash.

This being done the ceremony is concluded, and the sick person can obtain and apply any good remedy to the ailment, and he will soon recover.

The Ma-Pa and Fondor-Pa are stones that remain stationary, but the Pa-Yera can be moved from place to place as may be necessary, in case a person may not be able to walk or be carried, or where no Ma-Pa or Fondor-Pa is near.

The following particulars of old time customs were related to me by the present (1908) paramount chief of the Sa-Krim country, Francis Fawundu.

On the sandbank immediately opposite the famous town of Mano Bonjehma on the Kase, or as it is called by the natives, the Mapehl Lake, it was the custom, about once in fifty years, to make a sacrifice to the devil who was thought to reside under the water. In the dry season, when this ceremony was to take place, the men and women proceeded to the allotted spot, where they remained while the "medicine-man" went through his incantations to the evil spirit. The magician carried cooked rice in a pewter basin which had been brought by a Spanish slave-ship in earlier times. This basin was wrapped in white cloth, and with a certain ceremony was thrown into the water; if it was accepted by the devil a sound resembling the firing of a gun would, after a few minutes, be heard; but if not accepted the basin would next day be found upon the bank.

If the offering was accepted a big dance was carried on in the town of Mano Bonjehma for three or four days, it was for the whole country. This sacrifice would perhaps be made on account of anticipated war in the hope that the war might not spoil the country, or it was to make the hearts of people "good" when anything was proposed to them, or for people to get "family." It was for everything that was good, and to drive out everything that was bad.

If not accepted nothing more could be done, as a second sacrifice could not be made.

A very long while ago a great warrior by the name of Vanjowa residing in the Sa-Krim wanted to make war with the Mendi tribe to save his own country. So he took his sword to the medicine-man, or "Hehbra," who told him that he must put his long war-sword in the water, and that it was to lie there for four days. When the time was up the medicine-man dived, brought up the sword, and asked the warrior (or "Krubu," as a warrior is called), for one white cloth to redeem the sword. He gave it, and was then told that he would not die by war, but would receive a wound on the right arm; it so happened that during the war he did get a gun-shot wound in his right arm as the medicine-man had predicted, but he was not killed and lived for many years after.

CHAPTER XXV

THE COAST AND ITS WATERWAYS

AFTER travelling by hammock for a hundred and twenty miles or so, the lower part of which was by long marches through forest scenery of great beauty, I arrived at Sulima and once more beheld the Atlantic Ocean from the surf-beaten shore.

Sulima, at the mouth of the river of the same name, is nearly at the limit of British territory in this south-eastern corner of the Colony, for if we were to continue along the beach still to the south-east for five miles we should then be stopped by the Mano River, the Liberian boundary. Instead, however, of going on to the frontier let us now turn in the opposite direction and consider the coast that lies between Sulima and Freetown. For those who do not know this coast perhaps the easiest way to get an idea of its peculiarities will be to open the map and follow me as I attempt to describe them.

The first thing that will strike us is that the irregular coast-line of the mainland, right away from the Mano River to the end of the Sherbro Island, is separated from the open sea first by Turner's Peninsula, a wooded sand-spit, about eighty miles in length, and then by the forty miles of Sherbro Island to Cape St. Ann. It will be readily understood that the space between the mainland and the peninsula and island forms a very fine waterway as into it flow several broad rivers. The beautiful Kase Lake is at the south end of the peninsula, only a mile from the ocean, and ten miles inland on the opposite side is the Mabessi Lake, also of large size. This is a famous fishing ground supplying the up-country people with fish, afterwards dried, for which there is a great demand.

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This great waterway, known as the Kittam and Bum-Kittam, seems as if marked out by nature for a trading centre, and as a matter of fact a great deal of business is done in places contiguous to it. It is navigable for a considerable distance all the year round, and much further during the rainy season, when it becomes very much swollen, the water rushing down with torrential swiftness.

Judging only from the map one would think that in a country traversed by so many fine rivers there should be no lack of means of water communication. Unfortunately these rivers are not quite so useful as they appear, for after a while so impeded is the rocky bed with boulders that they cease to be navigable at all. The Sulima River, for instance, is blocked at the Wedaro Falls, only twenty miles from its mouth, yet so lengthy is it that we have not yet located its source. The Big-Bum river also is only workable in the wet season as far as the falls at Mafweh, although its source is a very long way inland where it becomes known as the Sehwa. If only these rivers were navigable for any great distance how magnificently the country could be opened up!

The navigable heads of these lower rivers and the surrounding Hinterland is quite away from the influence of the railway, so the old difficulties of overland transport still remain, and the whole of the Sherbro district is to-day, as regards communication with the interior, what it was thirty-eight years ago when I first knew it. Files of native carriers, of whom it requires some twenty-five to carry a ton weight of palm-kernels, still tramp through the bush, with their palm-leaf hampers on their backs, to the European branch factories at the navigable heads of the waterways, where the produce is bought, and lightered down to the principal establishments at York Island or Bonthe, at the port of Sherbro, for shipment by the ocean steamers to Europe.

The slackest time of the year for trading is the period when the people are giving attention to the clearing of land for making rice or cassada farms, or as they say, "brushing-farm," which extends from January to March, when everything must give place to this work. By-and-by many will



THE SURF-BEATEN COAST AT SULIMA
Drawing in a surf-boat laden with cargo from the vessel in the offing.



BANNA JAGUA, PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF BENDU
The chief is seated in the centre; on the left of the picture is a fetish temple. The two men on the right are playing warre.

1961

be employed in scaring off the birds from the young rice, and later, of course, numbers of people will be occupied in the harvesting of the principal rice crops in October or November.

The busiest time is the wet season, when canoes and craft of all kinds and sizes come down to the lower waterways, and great activity prevails. Everybody is busy in some way or other with produce. It is often an extraordinary sight to see the quantities of craft at the wharves, the piles of imported goods within the factory compound, the swarms of native labourers amid the din of the coopers making up the oil-casks, and the strings of dusky children "tooting" the "banga" (that is, carrying the baskets, called "blies," of palm-kernels) on their heads; although nowadays this style of labour is rapidly being relegated to the past, and the modernised form of loading up small trucks on narrow gauge light rails, running them to the end of the wharf, and tipping the contents into the craft alongside is in vogue, while work steadily proceeds under the ever-watchful eyes of the European agent. The whole with its still primitive life set against a background of tropical vegetation, and especially of the feathery cocoa-nut palm that flourishes everywhere near the coast, with the bread-fruit and mango trees, is a scene that remains imprinted on the memory.

All the same the European assistant at these trading factories, with little or no interest in the country or its peoples, is apt to feel that this coast-line can be most safely surveyed from the promenade-deck of a homeward-bound steamer. With its uncounted miles of monotonous mangrove swamps and deep liquid mud-banks—such as I have seen nowhere else—it cannot be otherwise than unhealthy; for where the mangrove swamps are, there will the mosquitoes lurk, and scientific research has now revealed the fact that malarial fevers are more prevalent near swamps than elsewhere, and that this disease is carried by the infected *Anopheles* mosquito to human beings.

Before closing the map let me call attention to the little opening between Turner's Peninsula at Manna Point and Manea at the extremity opposite of Sherbro Island—known as

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the Shebar Straits. In the days of the slave-trade these straits were unfortunately too well known, as they enabled the slave-ships, which were always of small tonnage, to cross over the bar, and to lie concealed by the dense mangrove trees inside the Sherbro waters, there to remain in comparative safety until their living cargoes were collected and brought on board. It was an ideal place for slave-ships, and as many as four have been known to be inside the bar at one time.

From the earliest times of the Colony the Sherbro has played an important part. It was, however, only ceded to the British Government in 1862, although a treaty had been entered into with General Turner by the chiefs in 1825, at which time the exportation of the natives—in other words, the slave-trade—was at the height of its prosperity. Sierra Leone and the Sherbro, including the Gallinas country near to Liberia, were the principal places for the carrying on of this nefarious traffic, the French being apparently the greatest offenders.

The Sherbro afforded peculiar advantages to the slave-ships because of the little opening in the coast-line I have just pointed out.

It is not easy to know for how long this trade had been going on, but it must have been for a very long time. It is also impossible to form any definite opinion as to the vast number of natives that must have been shipped off by the French and Spanish slavers. Things evidently were going from bad to worse, the trade was increasing and the chiefs and slave-dealers becoming more defiant, until the abolition of the slave-trade by the British Government.

The Sherbro was practically given up to the trade in human beings, and the insolent attitude assumed by the chiefs, especially in the Big-Bum and the Gallinas, rendered it necessary that the Governor of Sierra Leone, General Turner, should personally command a punitive expedition to the Sherbro, which he carried out with complete success.¹

Unhappily, such was the anxiety of the Governor to write

¹ An interesting and graphic account of this expedition is to be found in the *Royal Gazette* of the 4th of March 1826.



THE PARA KOTU

"Medicine stones" supposed to possess supernatural powers for healing wounds or sickness.
The stones are lying at the foot of the tree.



THE GAME OF SE

A gambling game played with tops on a mat divided into four squares, the object being to cause one's own top to collide with that of an opponent and drive it off the mat.

THE HOUSE

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his despatches immediately upon his return to Freetown, after his very arduous exertions and constant exposure in the Sherbro, that it caused an illness which terminated fatally five days after his arrival, casting a gloom over the whole Colony; his Excellency's death being notified by an Extraordinary *Gazette* of the 7th of March 1826.

"Turner's Peninsula" commemorates both his expedition and his name.

The following extract from the *Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser* of the 26th of February 1821 will give a terrible picture of what slave-dealing really was:—

CONTRACT.

Copy.

GALLINAS, 25th Nov. 1820.

Articles of an Agreement drawn up between J. Kearney and Mr. Shacker on the one part, and Captain Guiot, of the Schooner *Marie*, on the other part. The said Mr. Shacker and J. O. Kearney do agree to pay unto Captain Guiot one hundred and five slaves, none to be under four English feet, and to be as equally proportioned men, women, boys, and girls, as can be.

The said Captain Guiot does agree to pay the whole of his cargo for the said slaves as per facture invoice. The whole of the above to be paid within forty-two days from the date hereof.

(Signed) J. O. KEARNEY.

(Signed) for MR. SHACKER.

J. O. KEARNEY.

CAPTAIN GUIOT.

And from the same journal of the 17th of September 1825 I have taken the further extract here given:—

Extracts from the log-book of the brig *L'Eleonore*, Saturday, the 25th March. The cutter *L'Oriflame*, Captain Poutounier, put to sea with one hundred and fifty slaves.

3rd April.—The schooner *Loise*, Captain Douille, from St. Thomas, entered under the pilotage of M. Reliquet.

21st.—A Spanish schooner came into the river.

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Saturday, March 12th.—Bought one little negro (negrillon) for 27 bars, viz. :

20 gallons of rum	20 bars
7 lbs. of powder	. . . . .	7 „

Monday, 21st March.—Bought a little negro for 26 bars. Detail of payment :

15 gallons of rum	. . . . .	15 bars
10 bars tobacco	. . . . .	10 „
1 lb. of powder	. . . . .	1 „

21st April.—Bought one negro as follows—a gun, one barrel of powder, one piece of blue baft, 20 bars of tobacco, 10 gallons of rum.

Gun	. . . . .	12 bars
Powder	. . . . .	25 „
Blue bat.	. . . . .	12 „
Tobacco	. . . . .	20 „
Rum	. . . . .	10 „
total		<u>79</u> bars.

The value of a bar being three shillings.

The Sherbro has always been a very important revenue-producing part of the Colony, and before the Government constructed the railway from Freetown to Baiima it exported by far the greater quantity of palm-oil and palm-kernels.

In my early days goods were brought out in sailing vessels, principally from Liverpool, consisting of the most heterogeneous mass of things imaginable. These vessels carried up to about 600 tons of cargo, and were of sufficiently light draught to allow of their being taken alongside the wharves of the few large European firms which then existed at Yel-bana, York Island, Bonthe, Bendu, and Mocolo; not one of these firms is left to-day.

These sailers after discharging their outward cargo took in a homeward load of native produce. It often happened that a ship would arrive just when another was completing her loading, taking in everything then in the stores, but as fifteen lay-days were allowed for each hundred tons of a ship's

registered tonnage it was no uncommon thing for a vessel to remain a couple of months, by which time the return cargo of produce would have been collected and shipped.

While waiting there would often be a good deal of sickness on board amongst the European crew, as masters during the interval of taking in cargo did not sufficiently study the health of their men, but thought more about getting work done on the ship, which necessitated the men being aloft, exposed to the tropical sun. Sherbro was then practically cut off from Freetown, there being only small and irregular communication, chiefly of a private character.

Some idea of the condition of the native mind in those days may be gathered from the remark made to me by a Sherbro man upon seeing the sails of an incoming vessel slowly and noiselessly gliding by the tall mangroves on the other side of a small island, which obscured the hull, "Oh, massa, massa, de debil dun come, look em!" Never having seen such a sight before, and as a devil is always uppermost in the native mind, the remark was in keeping with the general ignorance then prevailing. Ocean steamers have now superseded the crawling sailers whose passage each way was often from forty to sixty days, although now the journey is accomplished in a fortnight.

Bonthe, on Sherbro Island, is the seat of Government, and with York Island, four miles from it, is the principal place for the European firms, Sierra Leone and Syrian traders. The population at the last census in 1891 was 5490. Bonthe in itself is quite a small place, and it has always remained a mystery to me why it ever came to be selected for the official headquarters; for being in a narrow lagoon absolutely shut in by malarious mangrove swamps, and only navigable for small craft of very shallow draught, it presents no advantages for trading or official purposes; nevertheless, being the seat of Government, it has necessarily become the great centre that it now is, both for trade and for the residence of the Sierra Leonean Creoles. Simple wooden structures formerly used as places of worship and schools have now been superseded by stone buildings, and the mercantile factories have been rebuilt

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on modern lines; practically the whole of these new buildings have been put up within the last decade.

Bonthe is built on swamps, and when the tide is low, a very unpleasant bilge-water odour prevades the place. It is hot and overcrowded both by houses and people, but being with York Island the only trading market, the people naturally flock there, the one idea being money, money, money. The getting of what is called "cash monies" is paramount, and as at Freetown, everything must give place to it. In the stores of the European firms, in the stores of the Creole traders and of the Syrians, outside the stores, on the roadside pitches, hawkers, pedlars, and itinerating hucksters all vie in their respective ways with one another. There is selling over the big counter, over the small counter, off the strap tray, out of the calabashes carried on the heads of the little pickins, and even from off the ground itself—all is trade, nothing that brings in "cash monies" comes amiss.

Bonthe itself being on a small island leads to nowhere of any importance; in the dry season you can walk from Bonthe to its farthest extremity at Cape St. Ann, about forty miles distant. It has an extremely sandy soil, so that cassada is in many parts of the island very stunted and takes a long time to grow. About the island are a great many oil-palms, and cocoa-nut palms flourish luxuriantly. The inhabitants away from Bonthe are principally of the Sherbro tribe speaking the Sherbro language; the only industries they appear to follow, apart from getting palm-oil and kernels, with agriculture and fishing, are the making of light chairs, sofas, and hand-brooms from the split mid-rib of the oil-palm leaves. They have no idea of spinning and weaving cotton for the making of country-cloths. Being near to the trading stores at Bonthe they have from the earliest trading times been able to obtain large quantities of liquor, which to my mind has retarded their progress, and consequently they are not an industrious people, as any one may notice who walks through the island. I have felt this myself frequently.

In many parts no mud is to be obtained for daubing the walls of the huts, they are therefore made up of very coarse

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add to these supplies, especially in regard to dried fish, which is eagerly sought after. The supply of many kinds of fine fish in the Sherbro waterways is remarkable, and seems to be practically inexhaustible.

I have said that Bonthe is a clearing in the mangrove swamp, and that it receives no pure sea-breezes; but Bendu, on the mainland, five miles away, has always been regarded as the sanatorium of the Sherbro, which it most undoubtedly is; for one cannot get half-way across the broad water between the Sherbro Island and the mainland, with the Shebar in the near distance, without feeling the benefit of the sea-breeze. This has been remarked to me times out of number by officials and others who have crossed the water with me on different occasions; and upon landing at Bendu one can hardly be there five minutes without a feeling of returning energy taking the place of previous ennui and limpness.

At Bendu there is at low tide a delightfully clean wide sandy beach, with the water rippling up as at some quiet sea-side place on the English coast. It was only a few months ago that I stood on this beach alone, admiring the cleanliness of all the natural surroundings (so different to what I had been accustomed to at Bonthe), and drinking in the pure sea-breeze that was blowing in from the North Atlantic, visible through the Shebar over an expanse of six or seven miles of open water.

As I stood on that beach and looked over to the trading town of Bonthe with its backing of high mangroves, its fetid smells, and crowded cosmopolitan community, I wondered how such a position could ever have been selected and continued for the seat of Government in the Sherbro, when such a comparatively healthy spot as Bendu was available upon the mainland.

The Government has undoubtedly effected a radical change in the health of the European officials in Freetown by the erection for their occupation of up-to-date bungalows on the mountains, and in my opinion the advantages of Bendu as a health resort for Europeans over any other place in the port of Sherbro admits of no discussion. Any one interested

in the welfare of the European residents has only to visit the spot and prove by his own observation that it is so.

It may be asked why, if this change would be so beneficial, has it not been made? One answer to that is that the revenue would not allow of the necessary expenditure; and secondly, that it is only since the Hill Station bungalows have been erected at Sierra Leone, that the benefit to health by the change from overcrowded and unsanitary native towns to the hills has been conclusively proved. Bendu, although not having near hills, has good air and genial surroundings, and I venture to predict that some day the Government, by transferring their headquarters from the unpleasant, evil-smelling swamps of Bonthe to the healthier mainland at Bendu, will do much to lessen the high death-rate that prevails.

Bendu used to be a great resort for Sierra Leoneans, who traded there and cultivated small patches of ground for market produce; but during the rising in 1898 it was totally destroyed, and strange to say, it is the only town that has never been rebuilt in the port of Sherbro. In place of its broad roads and numerous well-built houses, the homes of its large Creole population, it is now a perfect wilderness, its desolation broken only by the little wooden telegraph station opened by the Government in 1907, which is worked by one young Creole operator, and from which news from all parts of the civilised world can be received. The wires are connected with the railway many miles away.

It cannot be expected that European firms, after having expended considerable sums of money at Bonthe in putting up new buildings or improving old ones, would be in favour of transferring their businesses from the unhealthy swamp-land there to the salubrious mainland at Bendu; for even at Freetown they have so far shown no inclination to avail themselves of the Governmental opportunities to build up at the Hill Station. The principals of these trading establishments, who all reside comfortably in their own countries, are not as a rule eager to incur the expense that would bring better health and more pleasing surroundings to their white employés, who no

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doubt would thankfully welcome such a change in their daily life and domestic comfort, and to whom the refreshing nights in a new location swept by the pure air from the North Atlantic could not fail to bring better health and increased energy.

As things are at present the young white men who for a mere pittance go out at the risk of their lives to do monotonous work in stores and offices in unsanitary towns hardly receive the consideration they need ; unfortunately, when one dies there are always many anxious to take his place.

CHAPTER XXVI

SHERBRO (*Fish*). FROM MINNOW TO TARPON

MOTHER Nature has been bounteous even to prodigality to Sierra Leone, but at present its inhabitants do not know how to turn the riches she has lavished upon them to account, except to a very limited extent. So in the Hinterland the palm-fruit rots ungathered, while down by the coast, where the waters are teeming with fish, only the most primitive methods of catching them are known.

Now Nature having provided this extraordinary supply of fish has also arranged that every native, man, woman, and child, shall crave for fish to eat with his rice. Everywhere both in the Colony and the Protectorate there is a great demand for fish, yet no one has so far discovered the means, which should surely be simple enough, to supply that demand.

The native knows nothing of steam-trawlers or of other methods of dealing with large quantities of fish, and the European in Africa is too inert to use his knowledge.

The prolific Sherbro waters abound in fish in extraordinary variety and in enormous quantities. There ought to be a gigantic business for large numbers of people here, but no particular attention is given to fishing. As there is no inducement to catch more than is necessary for local requirements, fishing is a mere hand-to-mouth affair that just meets the daily demand, although with easy access to the Freetown markets and European methods a splendid supply could be maintained for quite ten months out of the year. It is no uncommon thing to see the Sherbro water about the Port limits, boiling over, as it were, with immense shoals of moving fish, and when it is the season for the bunga (the commonest sort of fish, resembling the herring) the sight is indeed extra-

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ordinary, and I have known fishermen to make as much as twenty shillings a day from their seines. The varieties run from the minute minnow (or whitebait) to the huge tarpon, and include skate, guangua, grey mullet, mangrove paige, soles, catfish, grooper, shine-nose, sand and mangrove oysters, cockles, cray-fish, turtle, sharks, manatee, prawns, shrimps, and many other sorts.

Fishing is either by lines from dug-out canoes in mid-stream, or in shallow water when the tide is low by a couple of men with a folding seine, or by a cast net. The women use a hand trawling-net for minnows called a "bimbi," and as they catch the fish they take them from the net and pop them into the receptacle which is poised upon their heads, without removing it.

The photograph shows three sets of women working together.

The tarpon in the illustration was harpooned by a couple of natives in a dug-out canoe in the waterway opposite Mocolo, five miles from Bonthe, and quite near to the Shebar Strait. It was brought to me at once, when I had it hitched on to the Government crane and took the photograph now shown, the weight being 255 pounds and the dimensions as follows:

Length 8 feet 4 inches.

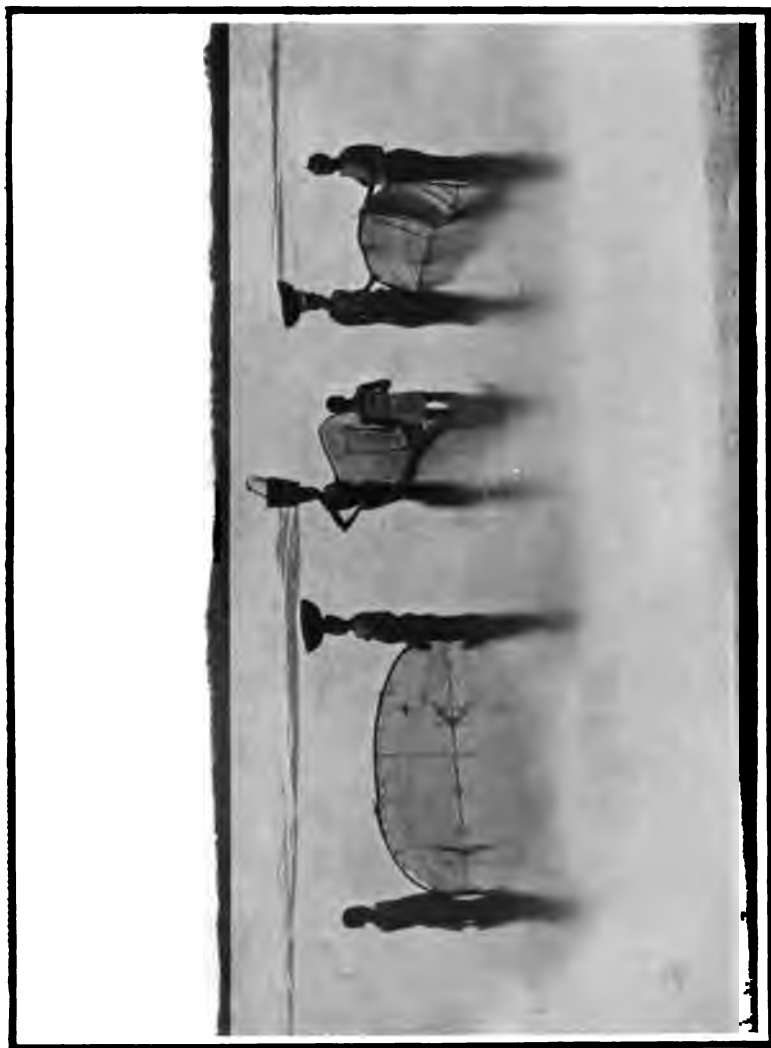
Across middle 1 foot 7 inches.

Thickness of back 8 inches.

I have since been authoritatively informed that this is a record. May and the first part of June is the right time to fish for these monsters.

Turtle are caught on the sea beaches at Sherbro Island, Turner's Peninsula, Sulima, and the Turtle Islands, the natives during the season going daily to look for the eggs which are deposited in the sand. I have seen turtle over four feet long swimming in the sea off Sherbro Island. The Dehma end of that island is noted for cockles, and when the water recedes, which it does for a considerable distance there, the beach is white with cockle shells, and a good deal of "tenne" fishing is done off the Turtle Islands close by.

Fish in Sherbro is excessively cheap; a basket of good sand-



FISHING WITH THE BIMBI NET

Women fishing for minnows, shrimps, and other small fish in the shallow water at Ponthe, Sherbro

1700

oysters in the shell may be had for threepence, a pint of mangrove oysters, opened, for the same price, and a rope of fine fish, perhaps eight to ten pounds weight, for sixpence. A large turtle, when offering, may be purchased for ten shillings or even less.

The Sherbro waters are the habitat of crocodiles, which at a certain season, the early rains about June, become very fierce and voracious. I have even known one of these amphibious reptiles to chase a woman on land for some distance before overtaking her, when it took a piece out of her leg. I remember also after dinner one evening coming up on to the verandah of my house at Bonthe, and suddenly hearing the most blood-curdling shrieks from some person on the beach close by. Ordering my sentry to ascertain the cause, he presently returned with a native who had been in company with another man trawling with a folding seine for fish, when in drawing it over the shallow water he had been attacked by a crocodile who clawed him down from the shoulder, but apparently becoming frightened, had made off without inflicting greater injuries, which, however, were sufficiently severe to necessitate the man's treatment in the hospital for some days.

These creatures attain to great size; I have landed them up to 16 feet, and have seen one upon the island bearing my own name opposite to Government House at Bonthe fully 25 feet long, and grey from old age. Unfortunately, being on that occasion without my rifle, it escaped into the water, although it was only awakened by the yelling of my boatmen when within fifty feet of it.

In the higher reaches of the Bum-Kittam and the Lower Kittam rivers hippopotami of enormous size can be seen disporting themselves in the water. Usually little more is visible than the top of the head, two very large protruding eyes, and perhaps a bit of the snout. Their habitat is amongst the tall reeds that grow on the river banks. They do not appear to molest the people, nor are the natives afraid of them. I have seen women and children working rice farms quite unconcernedly on the banks, while several hippos only a few yards from them have been playing about in the water.

On one occasion I was returning in my boat from the Kase Lake, when, nearing the town of Subu on the left side of the lower Kittam, I noticed a crowd of people at the water-side. Thinking that some tribal friction might be going on I pulled in and landed, but I found it was merely that a huge hippo had been killed and drawn towards the beach, where it was just about to be hacked to pieces.

The excitement was intense—yelling, shouting, gesticulations, and dancing created a perfect pandemonium; the delight of the people was a pleasure to see. Many of those forming the crowd had been called from the surrounding villages that were entitled to receive their shares of the spoil, and they stood looking on in wonderment at the great carcase that was to provide them with so much food.

As the day was waning I decided to remain the night at the town and see what might eventuate.

About a dozen men were told off to carve up the carcase, their only implements being trade matchets and small country-made knives. It seemed a gigantic work to perform with such insignificant tools; however, it went on apace, and as fast as the junks were hacked out by the carvers they were seized and carried away to the town by a small army of men and boys who stood in readiness. Those who had arrived by water in canoes received their portion at the public *abattoir*, and the last allotment of the huge beast that I saw was the enormous head (which, measuring with my stick, I found to be just over three feet in diameter at the neck), that had been severed from the trunk and tied to the stern of a dug-out canoe and was being towed away by the joyful paddlers. It was certainly a gruesome sight.

The town appeared to be full of hippo; men, women, boys, and girls all seemed to be affected with the desire for hippo, for wherever you went about the town you met chunks of hippo being carried or dragged over the ground.

Although the guardians of the carcase endeavoured to protect the "beef," it was plainly evident that a good deal of petty pilfering was being indulged in, for while disputes were taking place to the accompaniment of wild gesticulations,



TARPON

This one was caught near Bonthe, Sherbro. It weighed 255 lbs., and was 8 ft. 4 in. in length.

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many onlookers, awaiting an opportunity, immediately rushed up, knife in hand, to slash off surreptitiously any part of the flesh they could get at. This caused various chasings and chastisements, when the general *mêlée* afforded fresh openings for other pilferers to rush at the fast diminishing carcass and get off with whatever they were fortunate enough to attach.

By the time darkness had set in not a sign of anything unusual at the water-side was to be seen ; the entire hippo had disappeared, and the town had resumed its wonted quietness, broken only by the sound of a distant tom-tom. I occupied a small beehive-shaped house and retired early, but after awhile I became aware of a most unsavoury odour pervading the hut. Never having been surrounded by hippo "beef" before, I could not locate the fragrance, so it was only when daylight came round that I discovered that the hut next to mine had been made the store-house for the remains of the defunct hippo, which had been placed there until they could be apportioned out later in the morning.

I presently got under way and continued my journey, but before doing so I arranged for the purchase of the four tusks, which were to be removed, and kept for me until my return. So a couple of weeks later the tusks were handed to me, and now adorn the walls of my study, reminders of a novel and interesting incident.

The dense mangrove trees that in the Sherbro cover all the banks where the water is salt, are the home of thousands of grey monkeys, on whom the malaria so fatal to human beings has no effect.

In travelling through the vast African forests, some of which are immediately at the back of the Sherbro, I have frequently been struck by the fact that so few animals are to be seen there although great numbers inhabit these wilds.

It would seem that they become aware of the approach of the human invader, and flee before him long before he arrives at the spot they make their abode. Even the snakes, with which the bush and the coast are infested, fortunately for us make off as a rule at the first warning of our coming ; but

snake bites do sometimes occur. On a certain occasion I was told that one of my carriers had been bitten, and although I went to him at once, he was dead before I could reach him at the head of my column. He had probably trodden on a sleeping snake with his bare feet, as two small punctures were visible on one of his ankles.

As a rule natives have a wholesome dread of snakes, and will often when suddenly meeting one rush away from it with lightning rapidity; but now and again it happens that even a boy will display not only the most complete indifference, but will take the keenest delight in capturing one alive. Recently amongst my load-carriers and hammock-bearers was a small boy who had expressed a great wish to "follow" me. He was a particularly smart boy, and attached himself to the cook's department. After travelling some days in the bush, he astonished me by appearing before me laughing heartily, and holding up for my inspection a remarkably lively emerald-green whip snake about four feet long. He held the reptile by the back of the neck, and wound it round his own neck, wearing it for a time as a necklace, then encircling his body with it, coiling it round his wrists and enjoying the active twists and curls of the dangerous creature. He had himself caught it without injuring it. Evidently this youngster had a natural fearlessness of snakes, for not long afterwards, while going through a big forest, he spied a larger one, dropped what he was carrying, and darted off like the shot from a gun to capture it. On that occasion, however, he was impeded by the dense bush, and the snake had time to wriggle away.

My friend Major G. D'Arcy Anderson told me recently that in the Konno country, where he was District Commissioner, there is a "Snake Society" that has a specially large following, and that he once asked a member of this society to show him his power.

To do so, the man left at five o'clock in the afternoon and returned the next morning at ten o'clock with two cobras, one 7 feet and the other 9 feet, a python 12 feet, a horn viper 4 feet long, and four other snakes.

These he handled quite carelessly, although they were in

their natural condition. Their fangs had not been extracted, for he saw the cobras and viper kill fowls by their poison.

About the Blama country chimpanzees are fairly plentiful. They seem to have a preference for hilly places where there may be a profusion of oil-palms, for the reason that the tops of these tall trees make very excellent sleeping quarters at night. The "chimp" is rather a fastidious creature, and likes to bend over some of the lower leaves upon the top of the crown under the fronds and place them in such a manner that they make a flat and comfortable bed to lie upon. In the localities inhabited by these animals one may notice many of the oil-palms with their lower leaves either crushed or broken from this cause. This palm also provides the chimp with food, which is quite ready to his hand, for the cones containing the oil-nuts are close beside his improvised bed. He is extremely fond of the oily skin of the nut, and as the cones contain hundreds of nuts, he is able to eat to repletion while lying at ease, by merely picking out the nuts from the drooping cones as they hang from the crown of the tree upon which he is reposing. He can vary his food too, for it is said that the muscular strength of his long and powerful arms is so great that he is able to dig out the palm cabbage from the crown of the tree. Some time ago a large chimpanzee was found dead on the railway line; the cause of the catastrophe was, according to the natives, that he had been pulling so vigorously in his endeavours to break out the cabbage from a palm that it suddenly gave way, causing the animal to lose its balance, when down it fell from a great height and was killed. However, the oil-palm is not the only tree to which the chimp is attached; he has a liking for most big trees which have strong forked limbs, where he can construct a rough but comfortable kind of shelter with leaves and branches. In the heavy forests about Blama these huge and powerful creatures are, as I have said, numerous, and I have it upon good authority that as many as twenty have been seen by my informant in one band keeping up a concert of the most fearful howling and terrible screaming. It is rarely that the native hunters succeed in catching one alive, but they now and again manage to shoot a female chimpanzee that has a young

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one with her, which they usually secure, and take to a trader to purchase. It is only a short time ago, however, when a chimpanzee was shot near to my friend's house at Blama. The native huntsman called him to see it, and upon getting to it he took the measure of the animal, which was 5 feet in height—the span between its extended hands was 5 feet 6 inches—and the circumference of the stomach was 3 feet 6 inches. This was a large-sized beast, but there are larger ones to be found.

Chimpanzees are mischievous things in their wanderings. When they take it into their heads to visit a small fakai they become very troublesome, and are pretty sure not to leave it until they have plundered all the plantains, bananas, and paupaus which are always to be found growing outside the villages; and if they can include a few sticks of succulent sugar-cane, which are very frequently to be seen straggling about here and there, their enjoyment is complete. But they are not so over-particular in their dietary, anything and everything that they can successfully annex seems to meet with their approval.

They have a very decided *penchant* for a draught of palm-wine. If they can obtain it honestly, all well and good, but if not, they ascend a wine-palm when they happen to notice a calabash under the fronds placed there to receive the flowing liquor, and they surreptitiously drink the whole contents; so that the owner upon going to fetch his wine will find only the empty "jug" awaiting him, and in his wrath will return to the village, and unless restitution is made will proceed to swear the supposed human delinquent.

It is practically an impossibility to catch alive a grown-up chimpanzee even in a country-trap, but when they are old and blind there may be a better chance. The people say that one day a huntsman went to the big bush, where he saw a band of chimpanzees leading an old blind one. In order to frighten them he fired his gun, when the animals scattered in every direction leaving the poor old blind one stranded. It remained about the place, so the man came near to it and began imitating the peculiar call of a chimp, which some of the natives can do very cleverly. By this

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means he coaxed it to hold on to one end of a stick, while he held on to the other, continuing the coaxing cry until he got the creature to walk, and so by degrees led it out of the bush into his fakai, where it received most kindly treatment until it died some time afterwards.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SHERBRO CHURCHES

THE whole of the Sierra Leone Colony is professedly Christian, and if we might judge by the absolute cessation of work on Sunday, and by the eagerness with which all religious services are attended, we might come to the conclusion that more righteous communities than those connected with the various Sierra Leone churches did not exist. And, as a matter of fact, there is a great deal to admire in these coloured congregations, the result of long years of the most devoted Mission work, and of a lavish expenditure both of lives and money. To the Missions the Sierra Leoneans owe all they have of education and religion, and they show their gratitude by the practical interest they take in all that concerns their churches.

In the Sherbro the American "United Brethren in Christ"¹ were the first to begin work, and the incidents that led to their so doing are so unique that I must give them here with a certain amount of detail.

The story is briefly this: In July 1839 a vessel with a cargo of native Africans, who had been kidnapped on the West Coast of Africa, landed at a small village near Havana in Cuba. The suffering this human cargo had undergone on the voyage from Africa to the West Indies is indescribable.

On their arrival in Cuba they were sold to two Spaniards, Pedro Montez and José Ruis, and put on board the Spanish schooner *Amistad*. Jokingly the cook of the vessel told them they were to be killed and eaten upon reaching their

¹ "The United Brethren in Christ" are better known in England as "The Moravians."

destination. This greatly alarmed them, and led them to dare what otherwise they would not have ventured. Among the captives was a chief by the name of Cinque, a man of great physical strength and courage. There were a quantity of matchets on board; the chief arming himself and some of his friends with these, killed the captain and some of the crew, and took possession of the vessel, sparing, however, the lives of the two Spaniards. Cinque, who had noticed by the sun that they had sailed westward from Africa, now compelled the surviving Spaniards to sail the vessel eastward, and watched closely to see that they did it. But not knowing the use of the compass, during the night and on cloudy days, the Spaniards took advantage of his ignorance and sailed to the northward, so that some time in the following August they drifted to the shore near New London, U.S.A.

As their actions seemed strange they were captured, and when arrested they cried out frantically, "Sierra Leone! Sierra Leone!" These were the only words their captors could understand. A great many legal questions arose concerning the vessel and its cargo, with regard to salvage, ownership, and other matters. Somehow, probably by Spanish influence, it was decided that Cinque and thirty-eight others should be tried for piracy and murder on the high seas, and they were imprisoned to await trial.

The case awakened widespread interest in America, and a few men met in New York and appointed Lewis Tappan and two counsel to undertake the defence of the prisoners. The first difficulty was to find some one to interpret for them. Professor Gibbs of Yale University visited them, and laying down pennies before them counted them and made the prisoners do the same; thus he learned to count in their language. With this knowledge he went to New York and visited among the vessels in the harbour. He found on board a British man-of-war, a negro, James Covey, whose countenance brightened up when he heard Professor Gibbs counting in the Mendi language.

It transpired that Covey had been stolen in Africa, sold to a Portuguese slave-trader, and captured by the British.

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He had been sent to school in Sierra Leone, where he had learned English, and was then employed on a British warship. He was released by the commander and proved a good interpreter.

The result of the trial was that the prisoners were acquitted of murder and were set free; but the Spaniards, assisted by their Minister at Washington, appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. This caused some delay, but while waiting they were taught by Mr. Sherman Boothe, a theological student. The case was argued by the ablest lawyers, John Quincy Adams, ex-President of the United States, being among them. The Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower court and set them unconditionally free.

While preparations were being made to return them to Africa their instruction was continued by Mr. Boothe and the Reverend William Raymond, the latter subsequently accompanying them back to Africa.

When the expenses connected with the trial were all liquidated there still remained some surplus money in the hands of the committee, and this money was used as a nucleus, the committee adding to it, to launch a Mission.

They sailed from New York in November 1841. The vessel after a tedious passage arrived at Freetown on the 15th of January 1842.

Owing to tribal wars and the generally disturbed condition of the country, it was not practicable to reach the Upper Mendi country, and as some of the captives came from the Sherbro country, a site was selected on the Small Bum River at a place called Kor-Mendi.

Shortly after this a title was secured from the chiefs of the Sherbro Island for 400 acres of land on the present site at Bonthe, and the Mission Station established there was named "Good Hope," and is so called to this day.

After four years the American Missionary Association was formed and assumed the responsibility of the Mendi Mission. In addition to work at Kor-Mendi and at Good Hope (Bonthe) stations were established at Mo-Tappin on the Big Bum River and near Mano on the Mano Bagru. At the latter place a

modern saw-mill was erected, and other industrial features were introduced which did much, not only to supply building material for Bonthe and Freetown, but to train many of the natives in habits of mechanical industry. It was the hope of the founders of the Mission that the *Amistad* captives should form the nucleus of a Christian colony; but they were largely disappointed in this, for on their return many of them, while remaining in sympathy with the missionaries and rendering help as interpreters at times, reverted to their former mode of life.

The Mission formed the beginning of American missionary work in what is now the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone.

In 1855 the American United Brethren in Christ sent out three missionaries, who took up their headquarters at Bonthe while they explored and prospected for locations for the opening of Mission stations. Their first location was at Mokelli on the Jong River, which was afterwards abandoned for the fine bluff land at Shengeh, about midway between Bonthe and Freetown. This work had many drawbacks, and made little progress for nearly fifteen years, when the Reverend Joseph Gomer, a negro from America, was sent out in 1880. Mr. Gomer was a man of simple, tactful methods, and soon won his way into the hearts of the people. The work grew rapidly, and soon many schools were opened in the Sherbro country. In the meantime the American Missionary Association found their work very expensive, both in funds and lives. At least twenty missionaries died from the date of the founding of the Mission up to 1874.

The economical and successful management of the U.B.C. Mission under Mr. Gomer, led in 1882 the American Missionary Association to transfer to them all their work at Bonthe, Mano Bagru, Kor Mendi, and Motappin. Since then the whole work has been carried on by the U.B.C.

As I have already shown, this society has been steadily aggressive and has pushed far into the Hinterland. Under the directions of the Women's Missionary Association of the same Church, a most flourishing Mission was opened

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at Rotifunk on the Bompe River in 1875, which has been the base of other movements further inland. The society is generally known as "The Mendi Mission."

When the native rising took place at Rotifunk this town had been for a great many years one of the principal centres of the American Mendi Mission, and a religious, educational, and industrial training ground. The buildings were large and well-built, and the missionaries, both men and women, not only devoted their energies to the training of the children, but also did a considerable amount of splendid work in the way of dispensing medicine. For many years the Mendi Mission was a password for miles around, and often have I enjoyed the hospitality of these good people when travelling through the country before the advent of the railway. Everything had been progressing most favourably when in 1898 without any warning the Mission buildings were totally destroyed during the native rising, and the missionaries to the number of seven, of whom five were ladies, were cruelly murdered.

To all appearance the Rotifunk Mission was entirely wiped out, and, as I understand upon the best authority, when the question of its resuscitation was brought forward in America by the parent society, there were some who advocated the withdrawal of the Mission from the scene of the massacres. This was, however, overruled, and it was determined that the Rotifunk Mission should be reconstructed on greatly extended lines.

No time was lost; immediate steps were taken to find both men and women to fill the places of the martyred missionaries, and quick response followed from many who were eager to continue the good work. Volunteers and funds were at once at the command of the U.B.C., and to-day the flourishing Mission at Rotifunk stands as a witness of what a determined and enthusiastic religious body can accomplish in the face of such appalling disasters as those that overtook their original workers, to carry out what they rightly conceive to be their duty to the heathen.

The buildings destroyed were the Church, the Mission-



THE LATE REV. J. GOMER, HIS WIFE AND FAMILY

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House, the School, the Boys' Home, and the Girls' Home. Some of the furniture was afterwards discovered down the wells. The Rev. J. R. King, D.D., and Mrs. King, who were away on leave at the time, returned soon after the catastrophe to Rotifunk, where they collected the bones of their murdered friends and buried them together. They were afterwards exhumed and re-interred in the Mission Cemetery.

All the Mission girls and boys of course had been dispersed, and the Mission had to be reconstructed *de novo*. A large stone church has been erected to the memory of the missionaries, and is called "The Martyrs' Memorial." It was built largely by local contributions, the chief sending the "Poro" boys secretly at night to fill in the foundations. The church was built and dedicated in 1904 at a cost of £1000, materially aided by the Mission boys, who carried stones from Monkene, about two miles away. These lads also obtained stones for the building by diving into the Bumpe River for them.

As I have said, the church is all of country-stone; there are seven stained glass windows, one of which, a large one, was presented by the chief. There are four marble tablets, one commemorating the murdered missionaries, while the others are in memory of those missionaries who have succumbed to the effects of the climate.

Amongst those massacred were two lady doctors, Miss Hatfield and Miss Archer. A dispensary has now been erected and is named the "Hatfield-Archer Medical Dispensary." Before this was built the medical work was carried on in a small room in the basement of the Mission-House. The new building was opened in June 1907; it is of red bricks, which were made by the boys of the Mission, and contains five rooms, of which two are wards, one being for paying patients, and the other a general mixed ward, a dispensing room, consulting room, and a doctor's room.

The present medical head is Dr. Zenora E. Griggs, who is assisted by Nurse Dougherty (sister of the Principal of the Albert Academy, Freetown), a young lady whose kindness and vivacity throw a halo of cheerfulness around all she does.

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In 1907 over 2000 persons were medically treated, the patients coming from all directions, some even from 150 miles away. Those from a distance invariably come prepared with money up to 20s. and their bottles; when returning they are given a history of their complaint and a diagnosis on printed forms, on which are also noted particulars of the treatment and the amount paid as fee. They have been known to come back after years, bringing the documents with them, thus showing the care taken to preserve them in a country where, as we all know, it is difficult for natives to keep papers from the ravages of insects.

These people are principally out-patients, the chief troubles, as I am informed, being ulcers, open sores, leprosy, asthma, bronchitis, and elephantiasis, and the cases are pretty evenly divided between both sexes. In several instances they come after unsuccessfully trying country-medicines; some, I am told, after twenty years of unsuccessful country-treatment have at last sought relief at this little hospital.

Since the 1st of January 1908, to April the 10th, a little more than three months, no less than 1248 persons have been treated here. The dispensary is open on three days a week, and on each of these mornings before medicines are given out, a short service is held, consisting of Scripture-reading, explanation, asking of questions, and prayer, lasting about half-an-hour.

Biblical picture-cards are distributed with the medicines to the patients. By the means of this dispensary the Mission reaches many who otherwise could not be got at. For numbers who come for medical treatment are pagans pure and simple, never having so much as heard of God.

The daily attendance at the school is 93; the total number enrolled in March 1908 was 138. The hours are 10 to 3, with thirty minutes' interval. The lady principal is Professor Mary Elizabeth Stauffer. There are 37 boys in the Home and they are taught up to the sixth standard. The lady principal has a custom of inviting the pupils to choose a verse from the Bible. On one occasion a small boy selected the sixth verse of the first chapter of the Song of Solomon: "Look

not upon me, because I am black." This may perhaps be read with another humorous reply that was told to me of a Shengeh schoolboy, who upon being asked in class what was the capital of England, promptly replied "America."

The boys are taught to work upon Mission farms at all country-stations connected with the U.B.C. Mission, and considerable time and attention is devoted to industrial pursuits, with what good results the work and material of their fine new buildings show.

On Sundays the lady missionaries go out itinerating, while the elder students visit the villages, and get the people together in the *barris* (palaver houses) and have a little religious talk with them, which they seem to enjoy, as they give these young students a hearty welcome.

This Mission seems to be very successful in turning the Mendi to good account and in developing his qualities of hand, mind, and heart; for, to quote Browning, its typical worker has—

"The proper
Friend-making, everywhere friend finding soul,
Fit for the sunshine, so it followed him,
A happy tempered bringer of the best
Out of the worst."

Under the title of the Mendi Mission it has now twenty-five stations, mostly in the Protectorate, with about 900 children attending the schools. It has fifteen American missionaries in the field, and employs at the present time over forty native ministers, teachers, and evangelists. The Mission has always laid great stress on industrial training, and to this, no doubt, much of its lasting success is due.

In 1897 the late Rev. R. Cookson-Taylor, a native pastor, was put in charge of Good Hope station at Bonthe, but previous to this the Rev. J. R. King, the General Superintendent, began a collection towards the building of a better church there. Mr. Taylor took up the work with vigour, but the rebellion in 1898 brought it for a time to a stand-still. However, when things settled down the movement was con-

tinued with renewed enthusiasm, and on the 4th of January 1901 the foundation-stone of the "Weaver Memorial Church" was laid. At that time the membership was not large, and all were comparatively poor, but through the energy of the pastor, and the remarkable generosity of the whole community, the building was ready for dedication by the 5th of March 1905. The church is of imposing appearance, is a good, solid structure, and is well finished and furnished. It was built by native labour, and is a standing lesson in the value of industrial training. It cost over £3000, which, considering the difficulties of erecting a substantial stone building at Bonthe, where every block of stone has to be obtained from one of the rivers some miles distant and brought down by canoes, is remarkably economical.

This congregation, in common with the Anglican Church and other denominations, maintains a good day-school, and carries on a great deal of aggressive work for the evangelisation of the great Mendi and Creole population of the Sherbro.

The General Superintendent of the whole of the U.B.C. Mission in Sierra Leone and the Protectorate is the Rev. J. R. King, D.D., of Pennsylvania, a man eminently qualified for his work, as his training included not only a theological course at Otterbein University, but practical experience in farming and building, qualifications not to be undervalued in West Africa. Under his management the U.B.C. Church has prospered exceedingly. His headquarters are at Freetown, where he has recently put up a very fine block of school-buildings, the Albert Academy, erected at a cost of some £3000. His wife, also from the United States, is his very able assistant in everything, as well as being the Mission accountant.

At Bonthe all the religious denominations, except the Roman Catholics, have native pastors.

The Church Missionary Society now works through the "Native Pastorate" under an Anglican Bishop. The Anglican church at Bonthe is a really fine edifice, just like a modern English church. It is admirably worked by its native pastor, the Rev. Canon M. Wilson, M.A., who has

unbounded influence over his people. The church cost over £5000, nearly all of which was raised by the Sherbro community itself. Few things connected with the place have given me more pleasure than the splendid enthusiasm displayed, not only in building St. Matthew's, but in opening it free of debt. Canon Wilson has since been made pastor of Holy Trinity church, Freetown, the most important church there next to the Cathedral.

Mission work of all kinds must necessarily be carried on out here under very great difficulties, and when one considers how heavily it is handicapped by the liquor traffic it is indeed wonderful that it makes the progress it does, and that the missionary, in spite of all discouragement, still plods on.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAKING OF A BAI SHERBRO AND OF A SOKONG OF IMPERRI

THE country name of the Sherbro is Bullom, the Sherbro country is the "Porki Bullom," and the people are Bulloms or Mampas. The only derivation of the English name, Sherbro, that I have ever heard, or been able to arrive at is, that according to tradition the first man holding the title of chief was named Seh Bura, the Seh being his Poro name. After a time the place was known as Seh-Bura's country, corrupted into Seh-boro, and ultimately into Sherbro, by which name I have always known it.

It is curious that although the Sherbros claim to be the same people as the Bulloms on the other shore of the Sierra Leone or Rokel River, seven miles across at Freetown, they are known in the Bullom country itself as the people of the Mampa country, and the dialects are different. It is not known where Seh Bura originally came from, and as there are no written records it is extremely difficult to obtain any trustworthy information on the history of the Sherbro before the early treaties of less than a hundred years ago. But although the dialects of the Bulloms and Sherbros are different, there are several words and customs that are the same at both places, especially the title of the paramount chief, which is in both cases "Bai Sherbro," and the ceremonies that attend his Coronation.

The dignity of the Bai is strictly elective, but the election is in the hands of a council of chiefs who are the sole electors. This council is called the "Feffeh," each member of which has a distinctive office and title. There are twelve electors, all territorial chiefs from certain recognised towns. The big men, who compose the elective council and are styled Komra Bais,

speaker was to be seen by women; but when they were safe within the Poro the women returned to the town. The new chief and his speaker had to remain in seclusion, but were free to walk about within certain bounds, great care being taken that no woman should see them.

While still in seclusion, the chief-elect is visited by the principal men of the country, and consultations of chiefs are held in his presence for the purpose of instructing him in the country laws; and it is there, before his Coronation, that he is taught what are the obligations of a Sokong or paramount chief.

Among other things he is told that having been raised to that high position he no longer belongs to his family, but becomes guardian of all his subjects, and must always impartially administer justice to all people, no matter whence they come or of what nationality they may be.

"A sceptre," he is told, "is to be placed in your hand, and not a sword. You are to be a man of peace and not to precipitate the country into war."

Other instructions, many of them sacred and patriarchal in the minds of the people, are added; instructions which would be good if consistently carried out. He is then privately sworn upon country-medicine to be true to his obligations. The usual time of seclusion in the bush before the Coronation is three months.

It is customary to have a lot of boys initiated into the Poro before the Coronation comes on, that their numbers may make the ceremony more imposing.

Although I have myself crowned several of the Mendi chiefs, the Coronation of the Sokong of Imperri is the only Sherbro Coronation at which I have been present. I was able to photograph the scene just after the chief was "pulled" from the Poro bush, and here it is.

The Coronation was presided over by the Bai Sherbro, the paramount chief, the Suzerain of the whole Sherbro country.

At an important ceremony, of rare occurrence, such as this, the adjoining countries provide a Tasso, who is the head of the Poro order. On this occasion there were four



THE INSTALLATION OF A GREAT CHIEF, THE LATE SOKONG OF IMPERRI

The Sokong is seated in the centre, distinguished by a top hat, with his Speaker, or Lavari, on his right, wearing a bowler. The hut behind is the place of seclusion, where they were both confined for some time prior to the installation. The four men whose barbaric costume is surmounted by a skull are Tassos, whose fetish influence is very great.

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named Bumpe, also wearing a top hat wreathed in white, I had the pleasure of meeting a few months ago at his town of Nongo-ba Bullom, on the Bum Kittam River. I had not visited this town since 1898, when, during the rebellion, I went with a naval punitive expedition under Commander Peyton Hoskyns of H.M.S. *Blonde*, when we attacked and destroyed it.

At the Coronation of the Sokong, the chief-elect is carried round the town upon men's shoulders to a specially erected *barri*, and placed on a seat with the presiding chief and the chiefs of other towns assembled there. After a few minutes the announcement is made by the presiding chief that he presents their new Sokong to them. The announcement is received with acclamations of approval, and the people at once begin to offer presents in the shape of country-cloths, sheep, goats, fowls, and all kinds of things, most of which, however, are either retained by the presiding chief, or are divided with the other chiefs. Very little goes to the elected chief, as he is expected to obtain his own supplies when in power.

The offerings being finished, a white cloth is presented to the new chief. It is held in front of him by some of the principal people, with earth placed upon it. Upon his stretching out his hand to receive it, it is withdrawn, the principal chief saying—

“I will not give it to you.”

“Why not?” asks the new chief.

“Because having given it to you, you will consider the country wholly as your own, regardless of the people's rights, and do with it as you please.”

“I will not do so,” the reply is.

The cloth is again presented and withdrawn with the remark—

“I will not give it to you.”

“Why not?”

“Because you may plunge the country into war.”

“I will not do so.”

The third time it is presented and again withdrawn with

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some strong objurgation intended to extract a promise that must not be broken. The cloth is then handed to the new chief and he is at last king; a sceptre is sometimes placed upon the white cloth and also presented.

It is now his turn to catechise the assembly, and by himself or through some one speaking for him he will say :

“Well, you have made me king, and have given me the country; but what is the boundary of this country?”

Then the towns are publicly named. If there is no dispute they stand as they are enumerated, but usually there is some place in dispute, and this must be settled, if possible, at the time.

This concludes the serious part of the Coronation ceremony. The meeting then breaks up, and the concourse of people, who have come in from all parts, begin a series of rejoicings that are continued for a week or so, when a gradual dispersion takes place, the people returning to their homes, while the newly-crowned Sokong is left to carry out his duties in his residential town of Imperri.

But the election of a Bai, as I have already stated, can only be effected through the country organisation known as the Sherbro “fef-feh,” which is a council of the prominent chiefs of the Sittia land on the Sherbro Island.

Ya-bai, the chief of Sahaia, is the head of this political cabinet. The fef-feh is divided into sections of the different chiefdoms as follows :

Ya-bai, chief of Sahaia.

Ba-bior, chief of Mor.

The Ko-yama, chief of Gippi.

The Ba-te, chief of Torma.

The So-kam-ben, chief of
Saha-Bengu.

The Ba-kindeh, chief of Bogo.

The Banga, chief of Sampor.

The Simbe, chief of Konor.

The Neorbeh, chief of Bamba.

The Batik, chief of Momama.

The Kom-ra-bai, chief of Mania
(Sea bar).

During an interregnum an acting chief, whose distinctive title is the Shambo, carries on the Government. He is to act after the death of a Bai Sherbro and generally look after the country until such time as the fef-feh council shall be ready to elect a successor.

The Shambo must be an independent gentleman, not a person who trades. He must possess influence and wealth; his position is that of adviser; he is not a crowned chief, neither is he the principal Lavari or speaker.

When the members of the fef-feh have to make a new Bai, they and the Shambo consult together and decide who is the right and proper person to occupy the position. Upon the selection being made the Bai-elect is presented to the people; he will take the title of Bai Sherbro and will become, after the approval of the Governor, paramount chief of the Sittia land. The residential place of all Bai Sherbros is at Yonni on the Sherbro Island some five miles south of Bonthe, a waterside town opposite to the Bendu land.

The position of Bai Sherbro is not hereditary, but is entirely dependent upon the selection of the fef-feh.

The ceremony of electing the present Bai, Fama Yanni, took place before me at the town of Gippi near to Sahaia in January 1905 and was duly approved.

In 1890, when the Imperri country was under the control of the chiefs, a numerous but select body of natives associated themselves together under the title of the "Human Leopard Society," for the purpose of "keeping alive" a most drastic solid medicine called "Borfimor," which required to be anointed with human fat in order to be perfectly efficacious in its action. To obtain such an emollient the killing of human beings was necessary. It was to extend the scope of this medicine that the society increased its members, as the entrance fee for every member was not merely the price of a victim, but an actual victim.

The mystic name of "Borfimor" resounded throughout the Imperri land with terrifying effect; and so great was the belief of the people in its powerful fetish workings that all who could afford the cost of the "medicine," although entailing as it did human sacrifice, were anxious to get it, to treasure it, and provide for it as their most valued possession.

The "Human Leopard" covers his body with a leopard skin when about to attack his victim, crawling upon all



CAPE ST. ANN

The extreme Western point of the Sherbro Island. It faces the North Atlantic, and has a bad reputation from its dangerous shoals.



TONGO PLAYERS

Greatly feared medicine men, who by means of their fetish profess to be able to discover criminals who had escaped every other means of detection

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HUMAN LEOPARD SOCIETY 275

fours in order to deceive. He carries a very sharp three-pronged, short-handled knife of country make, and carefully watching his opportunity, when an unsuspecting man, woman, boy, or girl is found quietly working in a secluded part of a farm he will suddenly rush from his concealment in the jungle behind the victim, pounce unperceived on him, and thrust his knife into the neck, severing the vertebræ; death in most cases being practically instantaneous.

It is always an isolated person that is singled out to be so victimised.¹

Many persons having been missed and presumed to have been murdered by the "Human Leopards," the chief of one of the principal towns sent messengers to the "Tongo players," who resided in another country some distance away, inviting them to come to his town with the intention of finding out by means of incantations with the "Tongora" the perpetrators of these revolting crimes.

The "Tongo players" were a set of greatly feared medicine-men, who, by means of their fetish, professed to be able to discover the evil-doers in cases of crimes that baffled detection by the ordinary methods.

Strange to relate, when they repaired to his town and began their "Tongo" play the first person to be charged was the very chief himself. He suffered death in the usual way by being burnt alive, and a great many who were alleged by the "Tongo players" to have participated in the murders were similarly put to death.

Upon these atrocities coming to the notice of the Government the "Tongo players" were banished the country, and the performance of the "Tongo" play was declared to be a criminal offence.

It was hoped that the "Human Leopard Society" had died away with the retribution meted out during the rebellion

¹ When I went up to investigate one of these cases of murder officially, I was shown the tree that the man was engaged in chopping down at the time he was attacked by the "Human Leopard," his woollen cap being still on the ground. I also saw the place of concealment in the dense jungle from which the "Leopard" emerged, quite close by.

in 1898, but, unfortunately, this has not proved to be so, as cases are even now not infrequently coming to light when, upon conviction of the prisoners in the supreme court, the death penalty ensues.

But as the Imperri country is now under the immediate supervision of a European Assistant Commissioner it is probable that this savage custom will before long be stamped out.

The Toma secret society belongs entirely to the Sherbro, and corresponds with the Poro of the Mendi people. The Toma is said to be even more far-reaching in its mystic operations than the Poro.

A member of the Poro order cannot be a member of the Toma, neither can one of the Toma order belong to the Poro. The Toma differs very materially from the Poro, inasmuch as both men and women are included in the Toma, while the Poro is exclusively for the men and boys.

The Toma society holds its meetings in the thick bush which is called the Toma bush.

When a man is going to be initiated into the mysteries of the Toma he usually takes with him his sister or other female relative, and they will all be initiated and become members of the order at the same time.

While the Toma is in session it is not permissible for any Poro to be in the bush throughout the locality.

A Poro man dare not enter the Toma bush; formerly had he done so the consequences might have been death.

If a Toma devil is passing through a town or village, or is on his way to a town, and a Poro man unexpectedly hears the devil's "cry" near to him, and cannot possibly find a way to elude him, he will immediately prostrate himself upon the ground, and close his eyes. The Toma devil and his followers will then pass him without notice; but should he be observed attempting to spy the Toma devil, he will be caught, carried away to the bush, and will not be seen again, and it will be said that the devil "ate him up."

Whenever the Toma devil is "crying out" in any town all Poro men must retire inside their houses, and must not show themselves until the devil has gone away.



A STATE PROCESSION
Queen Messi of Massa, Sherbro, attending a political meeting. It will be observed that the top hat, the emblem of supreme authority, is not confined to male rulers.

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When the Toma is in the bush of any locality all the people of that place must observe and keep the Toma laws, from the chief downward, and so drastic are those laws that even in respect to a “woman palaver,” which may be placed at the head of all charges, even if caught *flagrante delicto*, her husband dare not bring the matter forward until the Toma has been “pulled” from the bush.

No tom-toms are to be beaten during the time the Toma is in session, neither is there to be any Bundu in the bush.

Members of the order do not mark themselves, as is usual in the Poro, but they can be readily distinguished by their names, which denote that they are of the Toma order and not of the Poro society.

The men may have such names as Menge, Sangor, or Kando, and the women Baleh or Yenke.

In former days when a Toma medicine was placed in the bush to prevent the cutting of palm-nuts, no other medicine could be put there, and no one would dare to cut a single cone until the medicine had been removed.

The Sherbro people have more dread of the effective workings of the Toma society than of those of the Poro society, and the Toma will remain longer in the bush than the ordinary Poro, sometimes occupying a year or more before the initiates are “pulled” and brought into the town.

Another old and important Sherbro fetish, in which the people of that tribe have implicit faith, is a medicine called Fangeh. The very knowledge that this medicine has been brought into a town is quite sufficient to throw the whole place into alarm.

Fangeh is of course procured by enlisting the paid services of the country-fashion or medicine-man. It is simple and accommodating in its presumed infallible action, inasmuch as it does not need to be taken by the unsuspecting person to be attacked. The dangerous power of the Fangeh which is to be imperceptibly transmitted to the individual, who may be some miles away, is centred in a bowl containing a certain preparation made by the medicine-man, the whole surmounted by

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a live frog "properly dressed," the dressing being simply a single string of white beads fastened round its body.

The medicine can be regulated to different degrees of severity; it may only partially incapacitate or disfigure the person, or it can, as the people believe, cause death.

I have had many cases of Fangenh brought to my notice for investigation, and I can safely assert that this particular fetish medicine has a most extraordinary hold upon the people of the Sherbro tribe.

CHAPTER XXIX

TRIBAL WARS THAT LED TO THE FORMING OF THE PROTECTORATE

IT is now time we returned to Freetown, which is about ninety-two miles to the north-west of Bonthe, Sherbro.

We have to do this distance by sea, and a very dangerous bit of navigation it is even for steamers.

Leaving the low shores of the Sherbro at Cape St. Ann, with the small specks we see in the distance and know to be the Turtle Islands, we pass the bluff at Shengeh near which are the Plantain Islands, and then cross Yawri Bay.

Yawri Bay is a very treacherous expanse of water during the rains, or the Harmattans, when the mainland and the island soon become indistinguishable.

A wide berth has to be given to its many shoals, and the most cautious navigation is necessary, for although a few years ago the Government, at a considerable expense, had this channel carefully buoyed, now and again steamers get upon the sand-banks, and how many canoes and people have been lost there I should not like to say. On one occasion when I was going from Freetown to Sherbro in a four-oared row boat, during a tornado at night, we were all but lost on a bank, and were only saved from destruction by the vivid lightning which enabled us to steer safely through the breakers.

After crossing Yawri Bay we come up to the Banana Islands, about two miles off the promontory of Kent upon the mainland. At this point the broken and mountainous background is a pleasant contrast to the level mangrove swamps we have left, and in about a couple of hours we are cautiously rounding the lighthouse at Cape Sierre Leone and once more

making for the harbour and so into Freetown itself. Before going on to the part of the Protectorate lying toward the French frontier, I will give a short account of those tribal wars that, devastating the countries we have just traversed, and troubling even the Coast, obliged the British Government to form the Protectorate.

It will be seen that the slave-trade lay at the root of all these troubles, and there is no doubt that were British watchfulness relaxed the native slave-trade would go on even now worse than ever.

When I first went out to the West Coast in 1871 the Colony of Sierra Leone consisted only of Freetown and the Peninsula, Sherbro Island and Turner's Peninsula as far as Camalay, and of sundry diminutive islands.

In 1883, for fiscal purposes only, the remainder of the coast-line, up to the Mano River, which forms the boundary between British territory and the Negro Republic of Liberia, was ceded by the chiefs to the British Government, these chiefs receiving small annual grants in perpetuity.

The ceded coast-line, however, only extended half a mile inland, and its possession gave the British Government no control over the country beyond, which remained under the absolute rule of the chiefs.

This state of things continued until 1896, and a very unsatisfactory state of things it always was. The exportation of slaves had been stopped on the Coast some years before, but as the Colonial Government were then powerless to interfere with the country beyond the coast-line, now called the Protectorate, slave-trading was flourishing in the Hinterland.

There was always a market for "mortals," a term often applied to slaves. The chiefs required slaves for labour on their land, and also to add to their own dignity; while the professional slave-dealer from the surrounding country travelled to the slave-markets with his cattle, guns, gun-powder, and other greatly-prized articles, to barter for human beings, cash in those days being absolutely unknown.

The price of slaves of course fluctuated according to the

dead bodies were put into the war-canoes and used as thwarts by the rowers to sit upon.

This state of things becoming intolerable, a very able and distinguished officer, Captain Copland Crawford, was placed in charge of the police at Sulima, and he it was who first struck terror into the native krubars or warriors with his small force of police assisted by native levies.

The name of Crawford as a fighting man will probably be handed down from father to son, and although it is now nineteen years since he left the country his deeds were brought to my remembrance quite recently by the son of one of the great chiefs whom he had assisted, and who told me that the fame of "Deh-a-bo"—Crawford's native name—which, although it must not be translated, implies much to those who understand it—will last as long as native wars are remembered.

This war showed abundantly how futile it was to attempt to maintain peace in a country over which there was not only no actual Government supervision, but the remoter parts of which were unexplored and its peoples unknown.

In 1860 the late Chief Fawundu went to Mano Salija, situated on the Mano River, that divides British and Liberian territory, to make peace between the Tehwors inhabiting the country at the back of Cape Mount and the Gallinas people of Bemna, Soro, and Jaiahun. Before he left his town of Mano Bonjehma, upon the right side of the Kase Lake and some fifteen miles from Mano Salija, he asked the "Hebra" or medicine-man if he would succeed in his mission of intercession. The ordinary fee of a piece of twelve yards of white shirting was demanded and given. The medicine-man put it under the water, in four days he removed it, called the chief into the Poro bush, and returned the cloth to him, saying he was to make a "wuja" (a covering to a kind of skull-cap), and also a girdle to wear round his waist, and to go; the Hebra stating that he would succeed in settling that war, but that he himself would not "come in peace." He did stop the fighting, but returned to his own town to find that in his absence a war had broken out between Chief Momo Kai Kai of Yonni, and Jabarti of Serabu, who were cousins, the war arising from the

recrudescence of old ill-feeling. Other powerful chiefs joined in the struggle, those doing so on Momo Kai Kai's side being Prince Jaia of Gendema, Chief Abdul Lahai of Juring, Chief Fabato of Marima, and Chief Fawundu, while on behalf of Jabarti were Bokari Governor of Sembehun, Queen Niaro of Bandasuma, and the Mendis as far as the Dama country, thus involving a very considerable area and its numerous peoples. The war began in 1881 and lasted for about five years, when Governor Rowe went to Lavana for the purpose of holding a peace-meeting between the belligerents, followed by a cessation of hostilities for a time; but two years afterwards the trouble broke out afresh, when Sir James Shaw Hay, who was then Governor, went to the town of Kase, a couple of miles beyond Lavana, and convened a great meeting of chiefs and people, which resulted in Bokary Governor, George Bapbu of Bandi, and Bai Jabi of Bome, Perri Krim country, being arrested and taken away. With this peace was declared, but nevertheless the war still went on, until Chief Fawundu called a number of chiefs to a big meeting at Mano Saliya, where he stated that the Government had twice endeavoured by its friendly influence to bring about peaceful relations between the belligerents, who had failed to observe their promises. The Mendis, he went on, still continued to bring down war, so, as the chiefs of the lower countries of Gallinas and other places near the Coast had signed "book" (agreement) not to fight with those tribes, they must endeavour themselves to conclude peace. This met with unanimous approval, and they still were at the meeting when the late Captain Copland Crawford arrived, accompanied only by his boatmen, and reported his arrival, saying that he was proceeding to Sulima. Ultimately the war was stopped by Crawford. It was his fighting at Johoma, at Lago, and at Bahama in Maperi, that completely put an end to the war; but before it was finished Mr. Garrett, who was then a travelling Commissioner, went to Lago and did fine work in releasing some 3000 persons, men, women, and children, who had been taken captive.

The war had spread all over the lower country, a part of it being in the Upper Kittam, which was completely devastated.

There was another quarrel between Banna Gombu of Sa in the Mehlehn, Krim and one Kortu of Naiahun also in the Mehlehn, Upper Kittam. It so happened that a few minutes before my own arrival at Sama in the Upper Kittam, a notable captive named Banna Lewis of Mambo of that river was killed. As my approach in a steam launch had been noticed it was thought that a white man was coming to carry him away, so under pretence of hiding him, he was taken to the back of the town and cut down by a sword, not uttering a sound but dying at once. It is reported by an eye-witness that he was a very wicked man, and had himself killed one Pea Charlie of Manni, which had incensed the people against him. Crawford stopped this war also.

All these troubles as well as many others led, as I have stated, to the appointment of two travelling Commissioners, and ultimately to the formation of the Protectorate.

My own work, which lay towards the Liberian border, I have already described; that of my fellow-Commissioner, Mr. Garrett, took him for the most part along what is now the Anglo-French boundary, up to the far distant territory then belonging to the great Samodu or Samory.

Before, however, beginning Mr. Garrett's log I will add a short note upon a country I did not revisit on this recent tour, but which I went through with the then Governor, Sir Frederick Cardew, in 1894.

The Konno country is on the north-east frontier. In 1894 it was to all intents and purposes an unknown land; but so rapid was the change that in 1908, when I was again starting for a short tour, I was able in Freetown to engage for my hammock, boys who had come down from this same Konno country looking for work. These boys had picked up excellent English, and displayed so much common-sense that I was quite surprised at their intelligence. Evidently their experience of town life had been disappointing; work there was a great deal too precarious for them, and their one desire then was to earn a little money so that they might return to their native village, obtain a wife, and settle down; taking with them, no doubt, the idea of adding a little petty trading to their other means of gaining

a livelihood, for it would be practically impossible that they could have remained any time in Freetown without becoming imbued with the prevailing taste for trade.

I hope to show later that there should be a future of abundant and well-paid employment for these up-country people when scientific methods for dealing with the now wasted wealth of their oil-palms have been introduced. The up-country native will not continue very much longer to be content to crack his palm-nuts one by one, by hand; of that we may be quite sure.

It was in the Konno country where there occurred in the year 1893 that unfortunate collision between the French and British troops which resulted in the death of Captain Lendy and others. When Governor Cardew went through a part of that country, lying in British territory, three months afterwards, and I had the honour of accompanying him as topographer and astronomical observer, we found the place devastated and depopulated, so much so that we had to bivouac in the forests for eight nights, four of which were consecutive, as we met with no village, hut, or people of any description. But with the pacification of the country we find that Konno has gone ahead very rapidly, and I have no doubt that the deportation of the late Niagwa, paramount chief of Panguma, which joins Konno to the south-west, has contributed in no small measure to the general contentment of the people and the advancement of the country, for this chief had most of South Konno under his control, in fact, all the people were his slaves. Niagwa was a most arrogant and cruel man, as I know from my own knowledge, for I had much to do with him. He was one of the old autocratic chiefs, whose presence in the country was not consistent with progressive ideas.

I have said he was a cruel man: a proof of his brutality still exists, for there is a chief at Kangama who was in years gone by summoned to appear before Niagwa, and being rather dilatory in obeying the call, when he did appear, he was made to kneel down, and by direction of Niagwa two of his fingers were broken in the most deliberate manner.

The present paramount chief of Konno is Matturi of Jama,

who is a very wise and capable ruler, and his country to-day is quite a model of what a chiefdom should be. He really belongs to Gundama by the hills of that name which lie to the west of Panguma, but as he found that Konno in the north had been depopulated by slave-raids, he had it re-peopled.

Matturi has an immense number of wives, about four hundred.

There is another big chief at the town of Kai Yema, whose name is Suluku; he, too, is a capable and intelligent man, but is now very old.

The Konno people are a peaceable and quiet race and must feel the great advantage of British rule, for in days gone by the Konno country was one of the principal sources whence slaves were obtained. They lived in perpetual dread of being raided, while to-day they sit down with a feeling of safety to life, and of security in their farms and property.

The Konno people are great hunters and know the habits of all animals well. Some think their language sounds more musical than that of the Mendi or Timini, but the words consist of many syllables, and more words are needed to give expression to a thought.

During the past few years the position of the Konno has greatly improved, large towns having been built, while the building sites and the general conditions tending to better sanitary arrangements have been carefully considered.

The Konno country is some distance from the railway, and is about as far to the north-east as its influence extends. Many ancient steatite carvings have been found in parts of the Sierra Leone Protectorate, and are called in Mendi "Numori." A good deal of doubt exists as to the origin of these steatite figures, and very little information of a trustworthy character is to be obtained. I think that the most authentic account of them is that given to me by my friend Major G. D'Arcy Anderson, who as District Commissioner of the upper country, especially the Konno country, has had unusual opportunities of studying this most interesting subject; I shall, therefore, give in his own words the description of them with which he has very kindly supplied me.



THE LATE GEORGE. H. GARRETT, F.R.G.S.

Some very interesting extracts are here given from Mr. Garrett's log-book when on his mission of pacification to the Hinterland.

NUMORI

Steatite figures found in caves and supposed to be of very great antiquity.

1700

"These quaint figures are evidently the work of an earlier race, as the type of features and dress in most instances is entirely different from anything seen now amongst the natives. The nose is in most cases pronounced and hooked, the hair and beard often arranged in stiff curls resembling those seen in Assyrian sculpture. Many resemble the bronzes found at Benin, although specimens are to be met with showing characteristic styles of hair-dressing still in use among the present inhabitants, for instance, the 'cock's comb' in vogue amongst the Konno tribe.

"The carving is always grotesque, but the ancient sculptors must have been first-rate humourists. One head I have is such an obvious caricature that no one can see it without laughing.

"The figures are generally of steatite or soapstone, and are called 'Numori' by the natives. They are not held in veneration nor are they worshipped, but still they are valued as they are supposed to bring and keep good luck, and are looked upon as fairies or brownies.

"The natives are averse from selling them, although this feeling is rapidly dying out before advancing trade. The reply I always received when I asked how the figures came to the country was: 'They are the people who brought us into the land.'

"In the Mendi country the natives will place them in a farm, and if the rice crop is not coming on well, the owner of the farm will flog the figure unmercifully, after which chastisement the figure is believed to root up rice from the next farm and plant it in the farm of which it is the guardian.

"In the Timini country they are placed in the blacksmith's forge, and are supposed to assist in making the iron smelt easily. They are also placed as guardians at drinking places. No woman will touch these figures for fear of becoming sterile; this belief is common in the Timini, Konno, and Mendi tribes.

"To show how little reverence is attached to them, I have many specimens that have been used for grinding rice or Indian corn on a flat stone. It is strange that none of the tribes

now occupying the land can carve in stone, and even carving in wood is very rare.

"It was at first thought that these figures had been imported, probably by the Phoenicians, but this is palpably erroneous. Steatite is common throughout the Protectorate, and, moreover, damaged figures have been found in the steatite veins.

"The British Museum states that these figures are found in great quantities in tumuli. I think that this is another error possibly due to bad interpretation.

"I have made a study of these figures for over seven years, and find that almost every one now to be obtained in the Protectorate is not quite finished, there is some small part left incomplete; and if carefully examined, the reason is found to be that just at that spot there is a slight flaw in the stone, a small vein or pocket of mica which causes the stone to flake and break away. Now this fact bears out this story of how they are found as told me by the natives. It is as follows: The figures were carved *in situ* in the vein of steatite, and not separated from the mother rock until quite complete. If the slightest flaw was discovered another was commenced; therefore, when one of these old sculptor's shops is discovered, a large number of abandoned figures are found still attached to the rock. The natives separate them and carry them to their farms or towns.

"I can vouch for the truth of this statement, as the remains of one of these workings was shown to me in the Fulu Wusu country, and by careful search I found a figure still attached to the rock; this I separated, and it is now in the Imperial Institute. The working that I was shown had evidently been a chamber about nine feet in diameter, but the roof had fallen in. This chamber had apparently been formed by removing the steatite, and only abandoned when the vein became too impregnated with sand and mica to be of use for sculpture. I think that these workshops or chambers have been mistaken for 'tumuli,' and hence the statement in the British Museum. The natives told me that this is the only way they find the figures, and that no 'tumuli' have ever been heard of in or near

the Protectorate. Everything seems to point to the fact that the figures were made for export and certainly were not imported."

Major Anderson has certainly been singularly fortunate in seeing these figures in the caves; for although for some years past I have frequently had one or two brought to me in different parts of the country, I have never heard exactly how or where they were carved, nor have I known any other official who has been able to inform me of their origin. To this day in the country generally one can glean absolutely nothing from the natives in regard to these "Numori." The same answer to my inquiry has always been given: "They are dug up and are not the work of man."

CHAPTER XXX

THE NEED OF A PROTECTORATE

I HAVE in the foregoing pages endeavoured to show the present state of the Colony, but more particularly that of the Protectorate of Sierra Leone. Naturally I see everything against a well-remembered background, and that background so terrible that it would be impossible to bring home the force of its horrors to those who have had no personal experience of the darker side of native African life.

In certain quarters we are continually hearing of the rapacity of Great Britain; the British Lion is represented as incessantly prowling about the world seeking for some new territory to devour. His land-hunger is insatiable; by force of arms or by force of treaties barbarous tribes must, under the specious name of a Protectorate, be brought to acknowledge British supremacy: "Strictly for their own good, of course," says the sneerer. "What land was ever annexed by England except for that land's good?"

As I do not pretend to know exactly how our country acquired its other dependencies I say nothing on the subject; but our West African possession of Sierra Leone has been the study of the greater part of my life, and I have had very unusual opportunities for observation, so I think I have some little right to speak of that Colony.

If England has been unduly aggressive elsewhere that has certainly not been the case here. One has only to look at the map of West Africa to see how small is still her area compared with the vast extent of territory occupied by the French, her next-door neighbours, here as in Europe. Far from being eager to annex the ground, now the Protectorate,

England had held Sierra Leone just a hundred years without interfering at all with the native chiefs in the Hinterland. Why then did England at last move in their direction?

I will endeavour briefly to state the reasons that made the formation of a Protectorate absolutely necessary, and why the term "Protectorate" exactly expresses what the country and its natives required and in fact do still require.

My recent tour went no further than Kanre-Lahun, but eighteen years ago, after I had succeeded in making a friendly treaty there for the Government, I went on to the town of Pandeme in the Bunde country, far beyond our sphere of influence, and where the Mendi language was unknown. I had hoped that I might induce the chief of Pandeme to join the federation of chiefs, and that a treaty might be made such as the others had signed. Pandeme was a war-town protected by no less than ten war-fences. Here I met numbers of those Sofas of whom I had so often heard. War, the chief told me, was their business, the only business they knew or cared for. They, I had often heard, were mercenaries, willing to fight for any one who would employ them. All over the country it was quite enough to know that any chief had secured the services of the Sofas for the terror of him to be spread far and wide; for whenever the Sofas got into a place they overran the whole of the neighbouring country, and locusts did not destroy a tract of land more completely.

"The people from beyond who rode upon horses"—so they were described—were naturally dreaded by those natives who had scarcely ever seen a horse. The quickness with which they passed from place to place, to a people who had never heard of cavalry, seemed almost supernatural—there was no telling when or where these dreaded warriors might appear. My escort and myself happily escaped from Pandeme; but it was an experience to be remembered.

But mightier even than the Sofas themselves was the mysterious power that controlled them. Behind Liberia, stretching far away beyond the sources of the great river Niger, in the vast tracts of what is now the French Soudan,

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was then the empire of the mighty Samory, the great Almami Samodu, Commander of the Faithful.

Yonder, in Samory's land, was the market of the slave-dealer; year after year numberless captives, prisoners of war, were marched, with ropes round their necks, into that land, and few indeed were those who returned to tell the secrets of their slavery. England had stopped the slave-trade on the Coast, but who then could block the way of the slave-dealer and his gangs through the forest paths or the up-country rivers?

Those who have never with their own eyes beheld the spectacle of a man, with a rope round his neck, being led through the country like a dog, cannot imagine what the sight makes a Britisher feel.

I have seen it; but happily for me I was then in a position to set the man, with perhaps a woman and a babe, free, in the name of the British Government.

Up-country, before the Protectorate, the slaves would have had to go on to their doom among the dreaded "people from beyond."

This traffic in human beings lay at the root of most of the misery amongst the natives of the Hinterland, as indeed of most parts of Africa. Slaves were money, current coin, or its equivalent; how to get slaves was as urgent a question with the chiefs as how to make money is with us. War was the simplest way of getting slaves—provided you were the conqueror; so war was always going on, war, not only of one country or tribe against another, but a kind of civil war between men of the same tribe. Anything served for a pretext for entirely burning up a town of thatched huts, and carrying off the people. I have passed through countries utterly devastated, absolutely depopulated, in which only a few overgrown rice-farms, and many bleached skulls, remained to tell that human beings had not long since had their homes there.

This state of things had no doubt been going on from time immemorial; there was no security either for life or property. When the native planted his ground, he very literally could



SOFAS

The Sofas of the Alimami Samodu were greatly dreaded by all up-country people as being warlike and cruel; they left a trail of devastation and death behind them wherever they went. It was to make terms with Samodu that Mr. Garrett undertook his arduous mission.

1901

not tell whether he should gather the crop or not, therefore, he planted or sowed as little as possible, so there was no advance except in terror.

Let us pause here for a moment and look at this unhappy land—the absolute possession in those days of rulers who were simply preying upon each other, and upon their people, and whom no external danger could force into peace. Outside the limits of their chiefdoms, however, were three Great Powers, before one of whom it at last became evident even to some of the more enlightened of the native chiefs, the disunited tribes must ultimately fall; these three Great Powers were Samodu, France, and Great Britain.

Samodu and his Sofas, really the most dreaded, were already invading their territory at several points. France, anxious, naturally enough, to increase her boundaries, was already treating with the tribes nearest her settlements; and then along the Coast there was Great Britain, determined never to tolerate within her own limits the slave-trade by which so many of the chiefs lived and thrived, but by no means eager to interfere with the chiefs, far less to annex their lands.

This was the state of affairs in 1887, when the British Government was at last stirred up to inquire what was really going on in the country immediately beyond their Colony.

For some years past complaints had constantly been made to the Government of the closing to trade of the trunk roads into the interior, not only on the Mendi, but on the Port Lokko side. Port Lokko was then and is still, for it is outside the influence of the railway, a very important centre, as it is to Port Lokko that the overland Timine trade is brought down to embark its loads in canoes for Freetown.

The trade routes that terminate at Port Lokko run in a N.N.E. direction to Falaba, and beyond this into Samory's country, but for a considerable time they had been blocked. Those traders who attempted to come down to Port Lokko were captured, plundered, and sold into slavery.

Now much of this trade was from Samory's own land; when, therefore, the great Mohammedan chief, whose residential town was at Bissandu, a very long way to the north-east,

beyond Falaba, found that he was not getting his usual supplies from Freetown, he determined "to put war upon" the tribes who, he declared, were blocking the roads. Samory, or to give him his proper name, Almami Samodu, held among his titles that of Commander of the Faithful. The chiefs of the Hinterland were to him pagans, and it was thought at the time that it was Samodu's intention to give the war the force of a religious crusade, and utterly to destroy all the pagans who would not become followers of the Prophet. So what is generally called "the Sofa invasion" seemed to have been prompted both by Moslem fanaticism and by political considerations.

The blocking of the roads from the interior entailed a great loss on the Freetown community, and it became necessary to take measures for the opening of the roads and, if possible, the securing of peace. As a beginning, therefore, the late Major Morton Festing, Political Officer at Sierra Leone, was sent on a mission to the Almami Samodu, by the Governor, the late Sir Samuel Rowe.

Major Festing left Freetown one afternoon, and Sir Samuel Rowe, the Governor, and a group of officials and friends, of whom I was one, went down to the wharf to see him embark and to wish him God speed ; all of us deeply conscious that he was starting on an undertaking of the gravest importance, involving the greatest danger.

Festing was one of my own most valued friends ; it was not without serious forebodings that we all watched him depart, forebodings destined to be only too soon verified. He left, and none of us ever saw him return ; but this is an everyday occurrence in West Africa.

From time to time I received long, descriptive letters from him ; all unfortunately destroyed years ago. He arrived after a most difficult journey at Samory's town, to find that the Almami was away, fighting at a place thirteen or fourteen days distant. Major Festing, with the indomitable pluck of a British officer, went after him to the war camp, saw him, and was well received and well treated ; but I have no means of getting at the details of his visit now.

On his return journey, when he was at Sininkoro, about two hundred and fifty miles inland from Freetown, he was attacked by fever and died there. Two or three years later, my fellow Travelling Commissioner, Mr. G. H. Garrett, on one of his tours passed through Sininkoro, and found Festing's grave in the centre of the town.

The roads still continuing blocked, and the tribes in worse disorder than ever, in 1890, the Government sent Mr. Garrett into the Hinterland on a mission to discover the true cause of the blocking of the roads against the trade caravans, and, where possible, to make *en route* friendly treaties with the chiefs.

Mr. Garrett left Freetown, with these objects in view, in March 1890, and was away for 117 days, arriving again at Freetown in July, after such experiences that it was indeed marvellous that he returned alive; although it is to be feared that he never thoroughly recovered from that terrible journey.

Mr. Garrett's private log-book of that mission is now in my hands, and as I have permission from his widow to use it, I will endeavour to weave a connected narrative from its pages.

The narrative of my own tours I have already given in my book, "The Sherbro and its Hinterland;" it relates chiefly to my travels among the various countries classed under the general term of Mendiland; but Mr. Garrett began his mission by starting in the Government steam-launch in the opposite direction, making, in the first instance, for Port Lokko, at the head of the broad water-way of the same name.

As I have already stated, Port Lokko had long been, as it still is, the centre of the overland trade from the interior, and the terminus of the caravan routes. Roads also run from Port Lokko into the French territory; as a consequence French influence was noticeable on this side of our Colony, as was also that of the Arabs and Mohammedans from the Soudan.

Mr. Garrett was, however, well acquainted with the people of this part of the country before he started on his perilous mission, and plunged, not without misgivings, into the bewildering chaos of the up-country and its affairs.

CHAPTER XXXI

FROM MR. GARRETT'S LOG-BOOK

ON March 10th Mr. Garrett left Freetown in the Government launch for Port Lokko, about fifty miles off, by way of the broad estuary of the Sierra Leone or Rokel river and a long creek up to Port Lokko.

March 16th, 1890.—"A dull morning, and I must say I felt rather depressed at starting for the interior, whence so few return." So writes Mr. Garrett after leaving Port Lokko for his overland journey.

Then follows the log for every day's march during a somewhat monotonous week along the main N.N.E. route in the direction of Samory's empire.

On the eighth day he passed through Bombali, where the chief received him badly. He says the inhabitants are very short and of a low type. There was a tornado and rain, most of the carriers falling behind; some came in by nightfall, the remainder not at all that day.

"Next day arrived at Bumban, a town in a valley between high hills, hot, close, and unhealthy. Chief Suluku, a sensuous, dissipated-looking man, dirty and very superstitious, refused to have his likeness taken, and would not allow me to go up the hill to the right, as his Devil resides there, and he occasionally goes up and makes sacrifices. He, however, presented me with one bullock, and a quantity of rice and wood."

At this point, Bumban, Mr. Garrett wished to send his Port Lokko carriers back, and to engage fresh ones. The chief said he would see what he could do in the matter, and Mr. Garrett, understanding that if he made him a good present, carriers would probably be forthcoming, presented him with quite a long list of articles from the Government stores he was bringing

up for such purposes, of which he entered the amount with minute care. It is curious to those who do not understand the ways of West Africa, to come across these lists of cotton handkerchiefs, shirting, grey cloth, fez caps, &c., in such a log. This present, a large one, including two brass kettles, was given on March 26th. On the 27th Mr. Garrett writes:—

“Much disappointed at the carriers not appearing. However, Suluku has gone up the hill to make sacrifice, so perhaps to-morrow they will come;” but the morrow brought disappointment.

March 28th.—“It is evident I have been deceived. The chief this morning brought five little boys, and says he cannot get more; so I have lost several days in this unhealthy place, and been induced to give large presents. I must now go on with the Port Lokko boys at great expense.”

Then again comes the record of the monotonous daily journey, varied only by attacks of acute pain or doses of fever, and a constant interchange of presents, all carefully noted; until on April 5th there is this significant entry:—

April 5th.—“Arrived at Konkoba at noon. Traders confirm the reports of the utter desolation of the whole of Sangara, the northern part of Konkoba, and of Kissi.

“Small-pox raging at Konkoba; two deaths from it at 6 P.M., one in the adjoining hut to mine. Have cautioned the men not to mix with the people.”

April 7th.—“Arrived at Bafodia, situated between two hills at the top of a gorge. Half the town recently burned down. I found the chief of this place Almami Suman, an intelligent old man, superior to any of the other chiefs I had met in Biriwa or Warra Warra Limba. He complained bitterly of the treachery of the Sofas; he said he gave them one of his daughters, and with her, gold ornaments, and sent them large presents of cows and cloth. They professed to be most friendly, but one morning they attacked the people in the town, shooting them down for no cause whatever, carried off all the women and robbed them of their property. As his stipend was not paid he had concluded that we had deserted him, and he had thoughts of sending to the French to protect his country.”

"Sent on to Musaia, the next important town, to announce my arrival at Bafodia, and my intention to visit Musaia."

April 10th.—"I arrived at Musaia, and was exceedingly well received by the chief, Dusu Suri, with a large number of people, who expressed their pleasure at my visiting them, and said they were willing to place the whole country in my hands if I would save them. I promised to talk with them later on, the chief being so delighted at the hope of help my presence had brought them, that he asked permission to "play" on his horse there and then. He began by dancing and twisting first on one leg and then on the other, turning and twisting about, with his drawn sword in his hand. The horse he had mounted was a small pony, a poor miserable thing with no spirit in it, that with difficulty he urged on to a gallop, and then flung his arms and legs about in a most extraordinary fashion, a large number of armed men running after him.

"The following morning I held a large meeting at which were present many more chiefs, including the chiefs of Sinkunia and Falaba. At this meeting Chief Dusu Suri said he and the whole of the country welcomed me most heartily; they looked to me as their saviour. He confessed that they were quite unable to stand against the Sofas, but they would not submit to them; for, the last time they did so, as soon as the Sofas got into their towns they shot the inhabitants down, carried the women and young men away, and plundered them of all they possessed. He said the French had made overtures to them, offering them protection, but they did not like the French, and would rather not be under them, and hearing that a white man was coming up they decided to wait. They now placed themselves and their whole country in my hands, asking me to save them from the Sofas, but if I was unable to help them they would then be compelled to accept the offer of the French and go to them, in order to save their lives, and prevent their wives and children being sold.

"The other chiefs spoke in a similar strain, begging me to have pity on them as on my children, and save them. The chief of Falaba said: 'If every one in the country is to be killed

there will be no one left to take trade down to Freetown, and the English will have nothing to load their ships with.'

"I then made a treaty with Dusu Suri of Musaia, and with Dinkob of Falaba.

"After the meeting, the Chief Dusu Suri, in the name of himself and the country, presented me with one bullock and twenty small blies of clean rice, while the Chief of Sinkunia presented one sheep, I making suitable return presents from my little store of articles provided by the Government for this purpose.

"The same evening messengers came in from Sogoronia, reporting that the Sofas are advancing in this direction and are in the bush close to Sinkunia. Dusu Suri asked my permission to beat the town drum and assemble his people that they might send scouts on to the hills to keep watch. I assembled all my men, and instructing them to come at once if the assembly was sounded, called over the muster roll and dismissed them.

"On the following morning, slave-traders with twenty slaves, natives of this place, came in from Sinkunia, stating that the reported advance of the Sofas was false. The chief desired me to interfere with these slave-dealers, but I declined, and said he must do as he liked, I should not interfere in the matter. He brought the traders before me after he had taken away all the slaves.

"The head-man reports that Almami Samodu is angry with his people for bringing war down in this direction, and that a messenger from him to the Governor was just behind him, and will be in this evening or to-morrow. The next day, Sunday, April 13th, I made a treaty with Niama Fodeh, Chief of Sinkunia. No messenger from the Almami has yet arrived."

April 14th.—"The chief, Dusu Suri, with the other chiefs assembled, made 'Saraka' over the grave of the late chief, at which I was present, and participated in the rice and kola. The chief, in the name of himself and the whole country, presented me with a tusk of ivory as a sign that they gave the whole country and themselves to me.

"A messenger came in from Sorogonia, reporting the

arrival of four messengers from the Sofas demanding the surrender of the country or the flight of all the people.

"Sent Momadu Wakka, the Government Interpreter, who was accompanying me on this mission, and three constables to Sorogonia to interview the people there, report my arrival at Musaia, and announce my intention of visiting Sorogonia.

"After they had left a messenger came in from Foutah to report that the Sofas had been advancing in that direction, when the French went out into the bush, and, surprising them, killed them all.

"If true, this is good news.

"In the afternoon at four o'clock Momadu Wakka and the constables returned from Sorogonia. They reported that the people of Sorogonia were in ignorance of my presence here, and they were much surprised and frightened when they saw the constables. They changed their tone, and said the Almami had no intention of fighting Sulimania, Koranko, or Limba, and had only fought the Sangara people because they had rebelled and closed the road. I told my men to go back and report my arrival, and my intention to visit Dantilia, where Samodu was supposed to be. It is further reported that a messenger is on the way down from the Almami to the Governor.

"This messenger, Booya by name, arrived the next day with the letter, written in Arabic, which was translated for me by the Government Interpreter, Momadu Wakka, as follows:

"My satisfaction is God, all things for God, before conquering the Greeks and after conquering the Greeks, that they, the believers, will rejoice with the assistance of God, Grace and peace upon the Prophet whenever rain is pouring and when Pigeons are singing upon the trees. Peace unto the Prophet, after this thousand, thousand peace and thousand salutations selection and continually mixing breeze of scent of camphor.

"From the Commander of the Faithful to his lover friend that is Sanokoh Mahdi, Momadu Wakka and Siddi Kabba and Brumani, Almami Baraka and to their chief that is king. The necessity of this letter unto you to inform you I in your love and to be your

fellowship and your acquaintance to-day. To inform you also I sent a messenger to you with him many people, my messenger did not get road and he was sitting down on the way, for that reason I send this man unto you his name Binty Booyah that you will please to open the road between us. That is the road to Sierra Leone must be open to traders, I beg you also to this quickly, to inform you the stopping the road to Sierra Leone between me and you will be no good, peace be to whom follows the right way.

“ ‘ALMAMI SAMODU SON OF LAMFIAH. (*In stamp.*)’

“Booyah says the Almami told his war chiefs not to cross the Niger, and their doing so is upon their own responsibility. I gave to Booyah at his own request a piece of shirting, one fez cap, and a brass kettle, and requested him to accompany me to Kalieri and Dantilia, which he consents to do. He is accompanied by an old woman, a slave, who being a native of this place he has willingly given up.

“The next day Chief Karanday arrived. A thunderstorm was coming on, and as I had a slight touch of fever, I put off seeing him until the next morning. The hut leaked badly, and I had to move out my boxes and burn a fire all night to resist the damp chill.

“Accordingly the next day this chief called to see me, together with Chief Sukoh Karrefah of Mafindeh Kabia, Finnah Balla, chief of Mafindeh Singuya, both of Korankoh and independent chiefs, so Karanday stated. He also says he and his fathers have always belonged to the English, and they have no desire to hand their country over to the French, but if we decline to assist them they must either do so or all run away to Freetown.

“He says his country is the Sangara country, and comprises Woollahleh-Dougou and Kondeh-Dougou. At present, he declares, there is not a soul in his country except the Sofa war boys; those who have not run away having been killed or sold into slavery. He says he is anxious to give his country to the Governor, and the whole of the chiefs the same, as they must protect their children from the Sofas. He appeared uneasy at Momadu Wakka's interpreting, and said if he did

not interpret correctly they would hold him answerable for the consequences.

"The next day, the 18th of April, I was very unwell with fever and unable to see anybody."

Saturday, 19th April.—"Chiefs all called to see me, Karanday to present me with a small gold ring. They expressed their gratitude at my opportune arrival to save them, and their regret that they could not make me presents on account of their impoverished condition. A trader, passing from Foutah with cows, repeats the report of the total defeat of the Sofas by the French at Tumania in the Fooria country. He says he heard the heavy firing in the distance, and was told the cause and the result by the people of the towns through which he passed."

April 20th.—"Still unable to move, the chief having failed to supply the rice he promised. Sent the carriers out to the neighbouring villages to prepare rice. 5 P.M., a messenger came in to say Manga Isah of Kalieri is most anxious to see the white man; that he is one with the chiefs, but whilst the Sofas were with him had to dissemble. He confirms the news of the utter destruction of the Sofas by the French. He begs that I will send a messenger a day before me, and he will send rice to meet me at Falaba and have the road cleaned. The Chief of Sinkunia has gone to his town to prepare a house for me, the other chiefs begging hard that I will remain another day. I have consented the more willingly as at 4 P.M. there was a thunder squall and it has rained heavily ever since, with every prospect of its continuing all night."

April 21st.—"Two messengers, Maligi and Bokari, arrived from the Chief of Kalieri, bringing three gold rings, with his expressions of pleasure at my arrival and the assurance that he places the whole country and all that is in it under me. Later on Chiefs Finah Balla and Sukoh Karofell presented me with a sheep in lieu of kolas, with their expressions of regret that they could not give more, having been driven from their country by the Sofas.

"Constable I. S. Clive and one of the carriers down with small-pox. Both placed together and isolated."

April 22nd.—"Started the Sergeant off at 6 A.M., remained

myself to see the Koranko chiefs who came into Musaia last evening. Made a treaty with Koumbah Lahai, son of Moralli Bokary, who is, while his father remains a prisoner in the hands of the Sofas, chief of the whole of Koranko.

"This young chief gave the whole of his country to me, and begged me to try to obtain his father's release. He said that he and his sub-chiefs did not want to go to the French, but had been about to do so, as they had promised to protect them from the Sofas.

"He confirms the rout of the Sofas by the French, who, he says, have cannon with them.

"The country,' he says, 'from here, Musaia, for many weeks' journey is destroyed and deserted. The Sofas came there saying they only wanted the road open to pass their goods down; but that was a lie to enable them to get inside the towns; and then as soon as they were inside they rose up and killed all the people for no cause whatever.'

"Left Musaia at 7.20 A.M., the three treaty chiefs and many followers going with me for about a mile out of the town; but a great number of men, all armed, are following me to Falaba in order to collect some of their rice.

"Left I. S. Clive the constable, and the carrier, who were down with small-pox, at Musaia, with Bokary to mind them, in the care of the chief, who promises to ration them. I gave them in addition five shillings and three heads of tobacco each, besides herrings and meat.

"Arrived at Sinkunia at 10.20. The town stands some hundred feet higher than Musaia, is open and drier and has more air. The houses were large and well-built."

April 23rd.—"Left Sinkunia at 5.17 A.M. in the dark; arrived at Falaba at 1.6 P.M. Near the boundary of Sulima and Dembellia passed numerous elephant tracks through the grass. The road very heavy in places on account of the tall cane grass, eight to ten feet in height. It had not been cleared, and we had to force our way through it for miles.

"At Falaba we were told by two men acting as watchmen that some of the Sofas from Berria had visited the place in the morning. Sent one of them to the war chief Bilali, announce-

ing my arrival, and my intention to proceed to Kalieri tomorrow morning."

April 24th.—"Left Falaba at 6 A.M., and at 11 A.M. a short distance from Kalieri met messengers from the chief with a word of welcome and some kola nuts, kolas being an emblem of friendship."

A different state of things is here noticeable. Kalieri is now the last town in this direction within the British Protectorate. In those days it was held by the Sofas.

"Outside the town of Kalieri," Mr. Garrett continues, "the chief's son, Saiyani, came to meet us. Dismounting at some distance from us, he advanced, and taking off his big hat, shook hands with us. He said that, if I had no objection, the chief would like to play with his men—that is, parade them.

"We then passed through the town, and beyond it, on the other side, found the chief and his sub-chiefs under a cotton tree. They all shook hands and gave me kolas. There was music, shouting, &c.

"The 'play' then began. Six horsemen advanced rapidly, flinging themselves about on their horses, firing guns and so on. This was followed by a kind of sham fight between the mounted men and about two hundred men on foot, armed with guns, and firing rapidly, the horses standing and facing the fire well.

"In the afternoon a messenger, Mahdi Sehree, came in from Dantilia to see if the news of my arrival was true."

April 25th.—"Exchanged presents with Chief Manga Isah, Chief of Dantilia. Sent presents to the war chief Bilali and his messenger; agreeing to wait here for Bilali and meet him, as he wished, next Monday. Later in the day this chief sent in two bullocks as 'a shake hands,' and to ration my party while waiting for him."

Mr. Garrett was now definitely among the Sofas, and while waiting for Bilali, naturally endeavoured to get at their views of the situation. According to their own account, their motives for carrying war into the countries Mr. Garrett had already passed through, were not those attributed to them by the Hinterland chiefs; a term, by the way, not then in use.

"In conversation," Mr. Garrett continues, "the Sofas declare that they do not want to fight, and only do so to open the road. From all I can gather I think traders going down to Freetown from Samory's land must have been attacked by the tribe whose territory the road runs through, after these tribes thought that Samodu had been defeated by the French and that they might safely do so. A Sofa war chief, a relative of my interpreter, Momadu Wakka, says that the tribes they were then fighting, prepared war and sent after them—the Sofas. And many traders who at the time were passing through (along the main roads, down to Port Lokko), were plundered of their goods, killed or sold into slavery, and it is for this the Sofas are fighting.

"The Sofas are undoubtedly cruel, and are devastating the country; at the same time, I think there is truth in what they say. The hatred against them is so great all over the country, that when it was reported that Samodu was defeated and dead they thought the moment opportune for revenge, and rose up and killed all the people from his country within their reach.

"This war chief, in reply to my questions on the subject says the Sofas are fighting the French for two reasons: the French wish to take their country from them, that is one; the other is that the French wish to stop the road to traders desiring to pass through Sierra Leone, saying they must not go there. He admits they fought the other day at Tumania, when, he says, the French ran away. So I have no doubt that the report of the complete defeat of the Sofas by the French at that place is correct, more particularly as this war chief admitted that they could not fight the white man."

April 26th.—"Still at Kalieri. The chief of the place, Manga Isah, called to see me. He is an intelligent old man, his beard quite white, and his hair nearly so, but judging by his face I should think he was not as old as the natives say he is. He would not, however, enter into conversation on the state of the country, and I am informed he has doubts as to the peaceable intention of my visit, although I have assured him that I have come for the peace and good of the country and for nothing else.

"The war chief Bilali sent in a messenger to say that the

Almami Samodu is at Bissandu, and to acknowledge receipt of my message of peace and the white cloth—that is, the piece of shirting I had sent as a present to show that I had really come to Kalieri.”

April 27th.—“Still waiting at Kalieri for Bilali. Al Hassan arrived from Dantilia with a letter from Almami Samodu. He reports that after the late Major Festing had left, he (Al Hassan) had started for Freetown with ivory, gold, and 250 cows, but was stopped by the Sankara people and plundered of all his goods. The Almami has since then sent down more trade and many messengers, but they, too, have all been stopped, hence his fighting.

“The following is Momadu Wakka’s translation of the Almami Samodu’s letter to the Governor:—

“‘ My satisfaction is God. Praise be to God, who made paper messenger. Grace and peace upon best of mankind (Mohammed). Thousand thousand peace and thousand thousand chosen compliments; continually pure and clear, from the Almami of Sanankoro, to the King (Governor) of Sierra Leone, and to his Chief (Queen Victoria). The necessity of this letter to you is to inform you that your messenger, viz., Major Festing, met us in the Sikahso country. I told him I could not receive a Treaty from the English, the Treaty with the French being in my hand, I told him to return to the (Governor) King, and that when I returned from the Sikahso war, I would return the Treaty of the French, when (the) a Treaty would be possible between me and you. This is to inform you I have now returned the Treaty of the French to them, and for this reason I send this letter to you. I am ready now to make the Treaty with you and friendship and acquaintance. I have agreed also for you to build a house at Kabia, and the town of Falaba, but help me great great help with ammunition, I am of a nation of war, I in love of England to-day, and all that is in my country from my war, and my children, and myself, all I put it under the protection of the Governor and of the Queen, I am a Son of the Queen, I am in love of the Queen. I send this man unto you, viz., Al Hassan and his companion of the same name, and a man, viz., Sauwa, all that these people say unto you is my word. Peace be to whom follows the right way and deny his heart desire.’

"The houses and fences outside are finished in readiness for the reception of Bilali and his followers to-morrow."

April 28th.—"Bilali and his people were arriving all the morning. At three o'clock I was told he was ready to receive me, and I went outside to the cotton tree. Chief Manga Isah, of this town, and his party were already under the tree. After I was seated messengers ran backwards and forwards to Bilali's people, who were massed (nearly out of sight in the grass and bush) about 800 yards off. There was a fine open space between us, level and covered with short grass.

"Presently, the horsemen advanced, and went through movements indicating a fight, passing our front at a hand-gallop, firing guns into the air, brandishing their swords, turning in their saddles, throwing their arms and legs about to show they were perfectly at ease and could do as they liked in the saddle, making their horses prance and curvet. One man made his horse twice drop on its knees before me.

"It was a very pretty sight, the horses caparisoned in effective colours, red predominating, the men in bright red, yellow, dark blue, or white loose robes, that, blown out by the wind, added to the picturesqueness of the scene. For perhaps an hour they passed and repassed before us, producing the effect of large numbers.

"After the cavalry had had their turn the infantry advanced in masses and made a rude attempt at formation into companies, headed by their chief, Bilali, on horseback.

"As it looked as if a tornado were coming on I sent to Bilali, asking him to speak to me at once. He and his men then advanced in a compact body, the front ranks stooping and even kneeling, but creeping up all the time, although at first sight they appeared stationary.

"Bilali was mounted on a light grey horse, richly caparisoned and stained lightly in places with blue. He himself wore a heavy cumbersome war dress covered with gree-grees (charms) of various colours. He led his men slowly back, then dismounted, and came to me on foot. He is a young man with a heavy, unintelligent face, sensual lips, and an unfeeling, brutish look. He said he and his war men were

for me if I would have them. The Almami was for the English, and had sent him to open the road to Port Lokko.

"I expressed my pleasure at seeing him, and complimented him upon his army. I then told him that I had come on purpose to see who was stopping the road to traders; that my intention had been to go as far as Dantilia, but that I had met messengers from the Almami with letters to the Governor (whom I represented) which I had handed to my interpreter, Momadu Wakka, to read.

" 'Where was the Almami now?' I asked.

" 'At Bisandu,' Bilali replied.

" 'Then,' said I, 'I will go and see him there.'

"When I had said this silence fell upon all, from which I judged that it did not please them.

"After a while Bilali declared that he and his followers were the children of the English Queen, and that all they wished was to open the road to Port Lokko; whereupon I repeated that I had come up on purpose to open the road, and would guarantee a safe passage to all traders between the river Joliba (Niger) and Port Lokko.

"It was then getting late, so I told Bilali I would say no more to him then, but should like to meet him in the morning. He then remarked that if I were really pleased to see him I would let my men 'play' for him. I objected to their firing, but he begged so hard for it that I at length gave orders for my men to fire three rounds: I then fired five rounds with my Winchester, which pleased him greatly, and he asked me to let him look at the gun. We then shook hands and arranged to meet in the morning."

April 29th.—Mr. Garrett had another meeting with Bilali, and emphatically repeated what he had said on the previous occasion, adding that he had not intended visiting the Almami Samodu until after the receipt of his letters when he had determined to do so, and Mr. Garrett asked Bilali to give him his assistance on the journey. "This Bilali promised to do. He had already, he said, sent two messengers to the Almami to announce my arrival and intended visit. He promised to send men with me to build

houses where necessary, admitting that there was not a town left in the country, also he would have canoes ready to cross me over the rivers.

"I then desired him to withdraw his war from the road, and to assure me he would not proceed further, at all events until after my interview with the Almami.

"His answer to this was not quite satisfactory. He corroborated what Al Hassan, the Almami's nephew, had already stated, told me how Al Hassan had been attacked and plundered, and had with difficulty escaped being killed. He had sent, he declared, messengers to the Governor of Freetown, but they too had been captured and killed. Then he had sent his war to punish these Sangara people, and now that country had been utterly destroyed.

"The Almami had again sent out his nephew with ivory, gold, and cows, and had given him (Bilali) orders to conduct him safely to Port Lokko, which was what he was now doing.

"I told Bilali that I could guarantee to see him safely through to Freetown, but that if his war went down as well the country would fight him. He asked in reply, if a man could not do what he liked with his men? I told him that if a chief were placed to rule a people whom they did not accept there could be no peace."

Mr. Garrett's present to Bilali included twelve yards of velvet. A present was also handed to him for the Almami. Bilali kept his promise as to the men who were to accompany Mr. Garrett.

After this interview, Mr. Garrett doubtless looked forward to a comparatively quiet day; if so he was disappointed. At four o'clock the head-man of his Port Lokko carriers came to him and reported that none of his men would go further.

This is hardly to be wondered at, when we consider that they were already over six weeks' journey distant from their own people; that they had passed through long tracts of land utterly desolated by the war, that they had seen innumerable skeletons and skulls and the charred ruins of towns they recognised as being like their own. And now they were actually among the war people; men entirely different to any

with whom they were familiar, who rode and fought on horses so swiftly that to follow them on foot was impossible.

The "play" of Bilali's cavalry had very likely driven their fear up to terror. What might not happen to them in this strange far-off land? The dread of the unknown was evidently upon these men, who before this long journey had hardly ever seen a horse.

Mr. Garrett had some of the men called and spoke to them plainly. They had nothing to fear, he told them; they were perfectly safe; the war they had seen was now in his hands. He could command it if he chose.

They still hesitated. "There were plenty of Sofas," they said, "and our party was small."

"I told them," writes Mr. Garrett, "that I was going on. If they came with me I would guarantee their safety, but if they deserted me I should not pay them a penny, and they might find their way back as best they could."

"This decided them, as they were well aware how large were the odds against their not being captured and made slaves long before they could reach Port Lokko."

"Hardly had they left me when the sergeant came in to let me know that he had misgivings. He appeared to think I was being deceived, and that my two interpreters were playing into the hands of the Sofas."

"I pooh-poohed the notion, and told him there was no fear and that we should be treated as friends and ran no risk whatever."

"I had just finished with the sergeant when my Mendi carriers entered in a body and refused to go any further. I used the same arguments with them as with my Port Lokko boys, but they did not have the same effect upon the Mendis immediately, so I sent them about their business. Later on in the day the cook went and spoke to them, when several promised to go on with me; eventually all turned up on the following morning."

April 30th.—Mr. Garrett and his party were again on the march. They halted opposite Bilali's town; Bilali and his chiefs came out to meet him, and Mr. Garrett succeeded in extorting

a promise that he would advance no further than Falaba until his return. This Bilali promised, but added that he was not to be surprised if he heard that war had gone.

May 1st.—"Left Dantilia at 6.15 A.M., and arrived at Sulimania at 11 A.M. Dantilia has been a large town, but like the others we have passed is destroyed. It is now in possession of a fair number of Sofas, who have roofed in about a hundred and fifty houses. The head-man gave our whole party comfortable quarters. A heavy thunderstorm with much rain came on at 3 P.M., but the houses were water-tight and we fared very well."

May 2nd.—"Left Sulimania at 5.20 A.M., and reached the banks of the Niger or Joliba River at 7.49 A.M."

This was the river the Almami declared he had forbidden his war people to cross, adding that they had done so on their own responsibility.

CHAPTER XXXII

MR. GARRETT'S LOG CONTINUED: ACROSS THE NIGER

WE left Mr. Garrett just as he reached the banks of the Niger, an important point of his journey in which he was naturally deeply interested.

May 2nd, 1890.—"The place of crossing," he notes, "is about four days from the source of the Niger, and north of its junction with the Fali River. I took two photographs of the Niger, here better known as the Joliba, one from each side. It is here about two hundred feet wide from bank to bank, the water at date shallow, the deepest part reaching to the men's hips, banks of sand standing out more than half-way over. The stream was flowing by at quite two knots an hour.

"About a mile before the river is reached there is a view of its valley, showing the opposite ridge at about the same elevation, three miles away. The water, however, is not to be seen as the river winds a great deal and is only visible for short distances.

"The sand is light in colour, and appears to be principally quartz.

"The Niger is the boundary between the Sulima country and Woolaleh Dougou in Sangara."

It was the Sangara people the Almami Samodu accused of stopping the roads, and against whom he admitted he was waging war.

This Sangara country Mr. Garrett and his party, on crossing the Niger Sangara definitely entered, and about half a mile from the right bank at Farana, they had unmistakable evidence of the results of the war. The sight that met them there is thus described by Mr. Garrett:

"Farana has been a very large town, fully twice the size of

Falaba. It is now utterly destroyed. Human bones and skulls lie scattered about, and at the N.E. extremity of the town are the remains of about a hundred and twenty bodies in various stages of decomposition. Most of them have their hands tied, showing that they had been brought to this spot for execution; some have their heads off, and all are ghastly in their hideousness.

"Left Farana at 9.25. About three miles from Farana the body of a fine woman was lying across the pathway in a dreadful state of decomposition; its odour was sickening.

"After passing through four more destroyed towns we arrived at Bantu at 3 P.M., very tired, the journey having been long and tedious. At Bantu skeletons, skulls, and human remains were scattered about. The natives whom Bilali had sent with us at once began constructing a roof with sticks and grass, so by 6 P.M. one of the burned huts was fairly habitable. I invited my medical dresser to sleep inside, as he was again suffering from fever, and also the cook, who was very unwell. The rest of the party slept in the open."

May 3rd.—"Left Bantu at 5.30 A.M. The road good, over a fine, undulating country, with light trees, brush and short grass. Traces of leopards in the pathway. Passed through three burned towns to Nyamana Konde, which we reached at 11 A.M. It has been a good-sized town; there were a few houses unburned, which we occupied. Sky overcast and no chance of obtaining observations. I have been most unfortunate all the way up, and it would appear that a clear sky at night is rare in these parts, at this season at all events."

May 4th.—"This was a Sunday, but far from a day of rest to the travellers, as the log shows:

"Left Nyamana Konde at 5.40 A.M., and, passing over a hilly country, along an uncleared road, through which we had to cut our way all the time, and force our passage through the high cane grass, arrived at the Mafu River at 9.10 A.M. River about a hundred and fifty feet wide, water at date knee-deep, stream flowing about two knots an hour. The town opposite the crossing, once very large, now utterly destroyed.

"After breakfast went on at 9.55, crossed the Dalli stream and the Furu River, and arrived at 2.10 at Sininkoro, thoroughly

tired out and much vexed at finding the distance so great; Sorbe, one of the interpreters, having assured me it would be shorter than from Bantu to Nyamana Konde, whereas it was four hours longer.

"The road all the way very bad, quite overgrown with bush and grass, through which we had literally to cut our way. The country is covered with wood and profuse vegetation.

"Major Festing's grave is in the centre of the town, Sininkoro, which has been large but is now destroyed. The fence round the grave has been uprooted, but the spot is marked, and the bulbs he was carrying down with him and which his party had planted, one at the head and the other at the foot, are alive. I dug about them and picked off a few of the weeds growing on the grave, then erected a cross, and put a rough fence round it, afterwards taking a photograph of it, with the Corporal and two men who had accompanied Major Festing, and who are now with me, and Stephen, the head-man, who was kind and faithful to him to the last.

"David, the cook, had to be carried all the way on to-day's journey. Momadu Wakka is also unwell. Bei, the head-man of my Port Lokko boys, says they are quite knocked up, and the Sergeant later on asked if we could halt a day to rest the men. I have, therefore, decided to rest to-morrow."

The following day Mr. Garrett himself felt very unwell, and in the afternoon "turned in with fever."

May 6th.—"Fever all day and very prostrate."

May 7th.—"Fever all day, but abating."

May 8th.—"Fever nearly gone, but very prostrate. Got up at 11 A.M. A party of traders arrived reporting that Bilali had carried war down to Musaia. They were at Kaliere while we were there and left the following day, so I cannot see how they could know the truth of this report. The report is given by the slaves of the party, the head-man denying it and asserting that Bilali had not gone down to Musaia, but in the opposite direction to Dantilia.

"At three o'clock messengers arrived with letters from Free-town, four from home. The excitement rather threw me back, but I was very much pleased. These messengers state that there

is no foundation in the report that Bilali's war had gone down; on the contrary, they had heard that he had threatened with death any one who dared to go even in the direction of Falaba. They report that he has returned with his war and is at present at Dantilia.

"Shortly afterwards many head-men and their boys, part of the war party we had seen at Kaliere with Bilali, came in on their way back to Bissandu, where the Almami is at present."

May 9th.—"Better this morning, but still very prostrate. Weather very cold and wet after a sharp tornado. The medical dresser suffering again from fever, and the cook far from strong, so decided to remain another day.

"More war boys and some traders arrived on their way to Bissandu. One party had a milch cow, so I got some fresh milk, which did me great good."

May 10th.—It was not until Saturday that Mr. Garrett left Sininkoro, starting at 6.40, and arriving at Sirieria at 11.46, which place he felt to be healthier than Sininkoro, and he was conscious of being better there. The natives consider Sininkoro unhealthy, although it stands high and is open.

"The head-man of Sirieria gave me a large bowl of honey. I gave him in return four yards of grey cloth."

May 11th.—"Left at 5.45 A.M., arrived at Kinyakoh at 10.35 in a very exhausted condition, completely done up. Tried to buy a sheep but failed, hearing of which Bokary Sehdehbah presented me with a cow.

"Two messengers arrived from the Almami to Bilali, and report that when it was known that I was at Sininkoro there was great rejoicing.

"It is reported that Jahmah, who was with the caravan I passed when at Kukuna, has been killed by the French. It appears the French at Karousa on the Joliba have stopped the road and forbidden any one to cross the Joliba either to or from Kankan. Jahmah, who was anxious to visit the Almami's son at Bissandu, induced a man to cross him over the river at night, and then went on his journey rapidly until daybreak, when he thought he was safe. But the French, hearing the next day what he had done, sent after him and brought him back. The

officer asked him who was his next of kin, and when a boy was pointed out said he would take care of his property and had him shot immediately; the man who had ferried him over the river also."

May 12th.—"Left Kinyako at 6. Arrived at Bahgbeh at 1.10. The town has been large but is now a mass of blackened ruins. The Sofas are beginning to rebuild it. It is situated on a plain on the left bank of the Nyandan River. The head-man gave me some honey and fresh fish. I gave him eight yards of grey cloth.

"Bissandu appears to recede as we advance. When we left Sininkoro they said it was four days' journey. We have now been travelling three good days, and Bissandu is said to be four days' journey still."

May 13th.—"Left Bahgbeh at 6.5, crossed the Nyandan River on which it is situated, and arrived at Wassyah-Koudou at 11 A.M."

May 14th.—"Left at 5.25, arrived at the Milo River at 10.48. It flows to the north; stream running at date at two and a half to three knots an hour. It is about a hundred and fifty yards wide, and up to the men's shoulders. I crossed on the top of the hammock. I am told there is a canoe here usually, but it has been taken down the river for fishing. Arrived at Moussiah at 12.18. It is the first undestroyed town we have met since leaving Kaliere. The Chief of Kasa gave me some fresh milk and a sheep.

"Two of our boys attacked with small-pox. The town seems badly affected with it and I fear we shall have more cases. Have isolated the men and am doing all I can to keep the others away from them, and am having them watched."

May 15th.—"Another case of small-pox, Monrovia. Have arranged for all three, the two first to remain here in charge of the chief's wife.

"Left Moussiah at 6.45, arrived at Banan Koudah at 8.40 A.M. The Almami cannot receive me on Friday, so am to make short stages.

"Sent messenger to report my arrival here to the Almami; gave him a letter in Arabic to that effect."

May 16th.—"Left Banan Koudah at 6.10, arrived at Grehlah at 7.7 A.M. The chiefs say the Almami wishes me to remain here.

"At noon a messenger came in from the Almami to say he never gave orders for me to remain here, but, on the contrary, he wishes me to go on to Gerelany, where he will come to meet me to-morrow, and will receive me properly at the expiration of Ramadan, which will be on the 20th. Went on to Abbadalahai and stopped there.

"At noon the Almami's head speaker arrived with the Almami's compliments and welcome to his country. He brought some fresh milk for me, and said that the whole of his country and all his people were mine."

May 19th.—"The chief gives us a plentiful supply of rice daily."

May 20th.—"The moon not being visible last evening, we are to wait here until to-morrow, and to leave early in order to arrive at Bissandu in time for the prayer-meeting at 8.30 A.M.

From March 10th to May 21st Mr. Garrett had been painfully making his way up to the Almami Samodu. At length the morning of the eventful day on which he was to come face to face with this exalted potentate arrived. Mr. Garrett spends no time on his own feelings on starting for the long-expected interview, but has left us a very graphic account of the day's proceedings, and the only description of Samory I have ever met with, which I am sure my readers will be interested to see.

May 21st.—"Left Abbadalahai for Bissandu at 5.3 A.M., in a thick fog. Just outside the town, as we were crossing a farm to get into the main road we passed some graves just dug up by the wolves. The smell was sickening.

"We halted for a few moments just outside the town and then went on, arriving at Bissandu at 8 A.M.

"Inside the town of Bissandu we were kept waiting one hour and forty minutes, while prayers were going on in the Mosque; after which we were invited to proceed.

"He then asked me where I wished to stay. I replied that I should be perfectly satisfied with any quarters he might place at my disposal, and with this I bade him good-bye.

"As I was leaving, his son, Moreh, an intelligent lad of about nine years of age, who had been seated near the Almami, asked permission to shake hands with me, and having done so inquired my name.

"I was then led to the same huts that had been occupied by the late Major Festing; they were old and leaky, situated at the west end of the town on rising ground above the Korbahling stream.

"The town of Bissandu is very large; it is, in fact, a collection of towns, but all unfenced, with the exception of the Almami's compound and that of his son, both of which were fenced.

"Hardly had I arrived at my quarters when the Almami's little boy came in. He was not at all shy, and showed no awe either of the white man or of his strange belongings. He took up and handled all he saw, asking for many things, but putting each article down again before a reply could be given him and going on to something else.

"He came again in the evening, bringing me a few eggs, and wanting a Fez cap and a pistol. I had really nothing to give him.

"The Almami sent cooked rice and beef for my people, and a bullock and fresh milk.

"Many chiefs and traders, who frequently go down to Freetown, came to see me and kept me fully employed until after dark."

May 22nd.—"In the morning the Almami sent his head speaker to present me with ten bullocks, and to let me know that he would see me himself later.

"About noon I went over to Samodu's compound with my interpreter and constables.

"After waiting a few minutes the Almami sent the speaker to ask me in. I found the Commander of the Faithful seated in a leathern European chair in a clean and spacious hut. An iron kettle full of water was at his

feet, out of the spout of which he frequently filled his mouth, and after washing it, squirted the contents into a big tin bowl in front of him. Before our interview was over he had a small tin tea-pot brought him and drank out of the spout, and he rubbed his hands and feet all over with fresh butter.

"He was wearing the ordinary Mohammedan blue gown, with white trousers and slippers and a red Fez cap, around which was a gorgeous circlet of imitation precious stones, diamonds, sapphires, &c., &c.

"Several of his principal men were seated opposite him. He invited me to speak first.

"I said that his Excellency, the Governor of Sierra Leone, had commissioned me, as his representative, to visit the chiefs of the countries bordering on the settlement of Sierra Leone, with a view to seeing who or what was stopping the trade from coming down to Freetown as usual.

"That upon reaching Mussia I met his (the Almami's) messenger, Booya, with his letter, on reading which I decided to continue my journey to Bissandu in order to see him (Samodu) and arrange the friendship and peace he desires.

"That when I left Freetown I did not anticipate going so far or I should have come to him more suitably provided.

"I further said: That I understood he desired the road to Freetown to be open and free to traders passing up and down. This, I told him, now rested entirely with himself. The road had now been opened, and if he would withdraw his war from the countries the road went through, I would guarantee security to all legitimate traders from Falaba to Freetown and back.

"War and trade, I added, can never go hand in hand. Were he to force a way down to Port Lokko (which we should not permit) it would be the ruin of Sierra Leone, as we were dependent for our food supply upon the adjoining country, and, were we to allow that country to be destroyed, we should lose all our trade.

"I then reminded Samodu that when Umfalli went to Samoya, and the late Sir Samuel Rowe requested him to

withdraw, he did so; he had no wish to destroy the Queen's garden.

"Continuing, I said that the result of the present war was that for the last five years the road had been closed; no trade has passed down to Port Lokko, and there is not a soul in the Tambakko country.

"I then told him I understood him to say that he was no longer on friendly terms with the French, who were then fighting him.

"Samodu admitted that this was so; adding, that unless we placed our people at Falaba and Farana the French would take possession of those places before the next dries, when, he expected, they would attack him also.

"I then assured him that if he entered into a treaty with us our Government had no desire to take his country from him, but that he must withdraw his war from the road, and promise not to interfere with or carry war against any of the chiefs of the countries bordering on Sierra Leone, or who may have made treaties with the British Government; and further promise not to enter into any agreement with any Foreign Power or cede any of his territory without the consent of the Governor of Sierra Leone.

"I explained to the Almami that I had requested his nephew, Al Hassan, to await my return at Kaliere that he might be quite safe there. Had he continued his journey to Port Lokko he might have been plundered or killed, as on my way through the Limba country I had found the chiefs very distrustful of me, and under the impression that I was going up to the Almami to invite war down; so, as I had told Al Hassan, if he and his traders went along the road to Port Lokko, before my return, the chiefs would probably look upon them as spies, and, believing war was coming behind them, they might molest them.

"In conclusion, I thanked the Almami for the handsome way in which he had received me, naming Bilali and others who had been especially kind to me.

"I then said I should be glad to hear what he had to say in reply.

serving that he had heard what I had said and would obey.

"The arrangement I had proposed was what he desired. He would have nothing more to do with the French, who, when they had come up there, had made him handsome presents of money and guns. In proof of this statement he sent for and showed me twenty magazine rifles which they had given him. But, he declared, they had deceived him. They took his son to Paris, and upon his return took his country away from him by force. Here the Almami named the places they had taken.

"He repeated what he had said about expecting the French to fight him next dries, and his conviction that if the English did not place a force at Falaba and at Farana, the French would certainly fight him before the next dries were over.

"When, he continued, he had first made a treaty with the French they told him that one of the conditions must be that they closed the road to Freetown. To this, he said he had objected, telling them that he and his fathers before him had always gone to Freetown, that they got their powder, guns, and the clothes they wore from Freetown, and did not know any other place or wish to go elsewhere, and that hearing this the French gave way.

"One of the principal men present, Ansumaneh Jelli, then said that he went up to Siguiro soon after Major Festing's last visit, when the French demanded the treaty they thought he had made, and then said that the trade must not go to the English, but they must close the road to Freetown.

"After some further conversation, I left, after I had arranged to meet the following day to sign an agreement. I then shook hands with the Almami Samodu and left."

May 23rd.—"The speaker came this morning with his wives and nine ballenjehs and played and danced for me. The deep-toned instruments (ballenjehs) sounded well, and I think it was the best music of its kind I have heard.

"I took a photograph of them.

"Many of the Almami's wives and sons also came to see me and kept me going from 7 A.M. until past one o'clock. I am

that it could not be parted with. Eventually he was satisfied with the promise that it should be sent to him from Freetown by his own messengers, and the interview ended. In the evening he sent a supply of rice for the journey.

May 25th.—"At 7 A.M. I left for the Almami's compound to bid him good-bye. I had to wait some time before he came out in his rose-coloured silk gown, white turban, loose blue trousers, and light yellow shoes.

"After a short conversation he said he was going to take me on the road, so I returned at once and prepared to start; but before all my people were ready Samodu arrived, and dismounting, sat down in front of my hut.

"He carefully examined my hammock, and seeing my indiarubber boots, begged so hard for a pair that I promised to send a pair to him.

"When we were all ready I got into my hammock; the Almami mounted, and, accompanied by his principal chiefs and many of his sons, rode in front of me to the first village. There he dismounted, and walked with me to the stream just outside it and sat down under a tree.

"He again urged me to place posts at Farana and at Falaba, and repeated what he had said about the expected attack of the French, adding that he was not strong enough to stop them. I assured him that I was fully aware of the gravity of the situation and would report all he had said to his Excellency, but that I could not say what he would do in the matter.

"He then asked Fassineh, his chief adviser, for something, on which Fassineh produced a gold ring, and handed it to the Almami, who himself placed it on my left thumb; then wishing me a safe journey and commending me to God, bade me farewell, hoping that I would return next dries and remain some time with him.

"I thanked the Almami for his kindness, shook hands and bid him farewell; and, after taking leave of the principal chiefs in the same way, I got into the hammock and resumed my journey.

"We reached Kahloh at 12.15, and halted there for the night.

“The Almami offered me an ostrich, which I declined with many thanks, on account of the difficulty I should have had in bringing it down to Freetown.”

The party for the return journey consisted of Mr. Garrett and seventy-six persons.

CHAPTER XXXIII

BACK TO PORT LOKKO

THE return journey was beset by even greater difficulties than the up journey had been.

The rains had now definitely set in and were gaining strength daily. The march was too often through a country sodden by the tropical downpour, the streams swollen, the forests dripping with wet, the swamps submerged, the atmosphere misty, damp, and chill everywhere.

Small-pox caused Mr. Garrett very great trouble and anxiety. His people did not understand the necessity of isolating the patients, and some had to be severely dealt with to prevent the spread of the disease; but in spite of all precautions several deaths occurred.

Although the route taken diverged occasionally from that of the up-country journey, it was in the main the same, only the natural obstacles were accentuated by the season. I shall therefore only mention a few points of special interest or importance.

June 5th.—"Arrived at Farana," on the right bank of the Niger or Joliba. This was where Mr. Garrett had seen the decomposing bodies on the execution ground, and where the Almami Samodu had urged that a British post should be established.

He found the town still in a most offensive state. He received reports of the deaths from small-pox of several of his party he had left at different places to be looked after, which, he says, "has thrown a cloud over the whole camp, but justifies me in the strong measures I had adopted to stop communication with infectious cases.

"At 2.3 P.M. hoisted the British flag, and with a general

salute and three cheers for the Queen, I, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen of England, Empress of India, &c., took possession of the whole of the Sankara country."

The following day the party recrossed the Niger. Mr. Garrett was informed that the French had sent a small force into the neighbourhood to reconnoitre, but on their hearing that Bilali and his war were there they had retired.

June 11th.—At Kalieri, where they halted for a few days, several of the carriers being completely done up and all very tired. Here Mr. Garrett held a meeting, Bilali the great war chief, Al Hassan, Samory's nephew and others being present. The log continues:

"I read the treaty made with the Almami to them and explained all that had passed between us. The Almami's messenger gave his chief's message to Bilali.

"I then called upon Bilali to withdraw his war. He consented, but kept on speaking in parables and asking questions. He said if any one molested his traders he should carry war against them. This I forbade, but he did not willingly give way. He then said two chiefs were returning, one to Moussia and the other to Sinkunia, and that if he wanted them to fight as they had already done, he would carry war into both these places and he would not give way.

"Upon this I told him that if he carried war to the other side of Falaba the British would fight him, as we could not permit the country to be entirely destroyed.

"He eventually gave way and promised not to pass Falaba, but declaring that he would carry war to Tamiso, to Konno, and afterwards to the Mendi country. The meeting then broke up.

"Saiyong, the son of the chief of the town, promised to send rice, but said he must wait until after dark, as if the Sofas saw it they would requisition a lot of it. At nine o'clock he brought ten baskets of rice."

June 12th.—"Arrived at Falaba at 12.40 P.M. The chief Dinkale sent three men to welcome me and to thank me for what I had done.

"At 4 P.M. hoisted the British flag, which we saluted, and I

took formal possession of the Sulima country in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen."

Hardly was Queen Victoria in possession of the country before black ants invaded her representative's hut. They were, however, quickly driven back into the fire. Then a black snake was discovered, but was not to be got out of its hole.

The next day they left Falaba, and from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. marched through a steady rain to Sinkunia.

"Lighted good fires on arrival, and dried our wet clothing. Notwithstanding my waterproof I was wet through."

June 16th.—Bafodia, at which town Mr. Garrett had previously made a treaty with the chief. Here he found that a couple of his party, whom he had sent forward with despatches, had told the people, as they passed through the town the preceding day, that he was coming down with a great number of Sofas. There were a number of refugees from Sinkara, the country that had been entirely devastated, and the unfaithful messengers advised them to run away, which they did at once.

Mr. Garrett appears to have had some difficulty in getting the treaty chief to believe in the peaceful nature of his visit. He says: "I assured him that the object of my visit was to prevent a fresh incursion of the Sofas, and to preserve the country from aggression; that the Government would not have made him a treaty chief had they not wished to be friendly with him; that the British Government always respected their engagements and acted up to them, and that he must not believe what evil persons might say to the contrary.

"I then told him that I had received a letter from the Governor, who desired, as a further assurance to him of his friendly feeling towards him, that I should make him a present of £7, 10s.—which sum I then gave him.

"This appeared to please him; he expressed himself as satisfied, and in conversation told me of the evil report of my own messengers."

At other towns the same report preceded Mr. Garrett, so that when he arrived it was with difficulty that either food or

quarters could be found ; the chiefs were suspicious, and many of the people had fled to the bush. In one place, Mr. Garrett notes, "Although I pressed the chief to give me rice, for which I would pay, he has given me nothing. I am very unwell with influenza, and as the men must have something to eat I have agreed to remain here the day that they may collect cassada, &c."

"At another town the chief received me coldly, and I do not think believes a word I told him, but is under the impression the Sofas' war will come down."

June 20th and 23rd.—"Attacked with sharp fever." Two days later: "Worried out of my life about the rations." The day following: "As we have literally nothing to eat am forced to go on."

The next day, however, a supply of stores arrived from his Excellency, very welcome to Mr. Garrett for himself, but not of the kind to form a staple food for the carriers, so in a few days the men had again little to eat; and we read such an entry as this:

"Arrived thoroughly exhausted and had to lie down. The whole party are done up and starving. We can buy nothing to eat and cannot procure it from the chiefs on the way."

The chiefs were often unwilling to make the desired treaty, and entries like this occur: "I mentioned making a treaty, but the chief demurred, saying he must consult his head-man, and, as I found that he considered it a concession on his part, I explained to him that it was a great privilege to be in treaty with the English Government, and then said no more about it. He says he has heard that constables have arrested a man for having captured and sold some strangers passing along the road, but professed ignorance of all details."

"No rations at all were given to the men yesterday, but to-day we have beef and half rations of rice. We have now only one full day's rations to carry us down to Port Lokko.' (Still a good three days' journey.)"

July 1st.—"Arrived at Makendi. The chief received me well, presenting me with a sheep and a bly of clean rice. He thanked me for all I had done for the country, and said he

always protected traders and received them well. This, I understand, is true. He says Korbah of Lokko and the chiefs under him are the people that interfere with strangers passing along the road.

July 2nd.—"Left at 6.3 A.M., and after a difficult march across the big swamp, arrived at Matolo at 9 A.M. I remained here fifty minutes for breakfast, and regretted afterwards that I was not aware that it was the chief of this place, Wongbo, the son of Korbah of Lokko, who plunders and sells strangers.

"Arrived at Makonta at 1 P.M., where chief Barba gave me a hearty welcome. He says Wongbo the other day sold a Mori-man; hearing which he, Barba, sent money to redeem him, and has placed the matter before the Alikarli. He says Wongbo is always interfering with strangers, plundering and selling them."

July 3rd.—"Left Makonta at 6.20 A.M. A good, but uncleaned road, water on the way, but shallow and sandy. Many good villages and farms all the way. Arrived at Ro Baga at noon. All tired, but in good spirits at being but one day from Port Lokko."

July 4th.—"Left Ro Baga at 6.3 A.M. Fair road but swamp on the way; passing many villages and towns, across the Sogborn River, through Ro Biss to Port Lokko, where we arrived at 1 P.M., very tired.

"No launch; so began preparing accounts to pay off the men."

Thus quietly, without note or comment, ends Mr. Garrett's account of a journey that had only been carried through by a dogged courage that refused to be beaten while life lasted and resistance was possible.

Eventually the Almami Samodu was totally defeated by the French, who annexed his territory; after which the French and British Governments came to a friendly arrangement, resulting in the delimitation of the Anglo-French boundaries.

Since then the slave-trade throughout our Hinterland has been entirely stopped.

The British dominions cannot be further extended. As the map shows, the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone

on the land side by the Liberian territory; while, happily for us, the British Government retains possession of the all-important Coast, and consequently of the command of the sea.

Our dominions cannot, then, be extended in area, but they may, it seems to me, be indefinitely increased in value, to the great advantage both of our own Government and of all classes of the native population.

As I have already tried to convey, the indigenous riches of the Protectorate are still largely unused; so, in conclusion, I will venture to dwell rather more in detail upon the principal assets of this undeveloped wealth, of which, naturally, the oil-palm stands conspicuously the first.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE OIL-PALM

THE oil-palm reigns supreme on the West Coast of Africa; it is impossible to exaggerate the important part this sovereign tree fills in the life of its country. To the natives it has always been a kind of beneficent Providence, springing untended from the ground, requiring neither planting nor watering, asking nothing of human hands, but giving all its substance freely, without stint, and with unfailing regularity. It provides the people among whom it flourishes with food and drink, and with nearly all the simple necessities of daily life. It even finds them employment, providing them with the two staple articles of their commerce which bring work and gain to vast numbers of its subjects.

In the regions I have been describing, both up-country and on the Coast, the oil-palm flourishes in the greatest luxuriance. I have seen it growing so densely that the massive leaves at the top of the tall trunks have almost excluded the light of day. It grows, moreover, in every conceivable quantity, from wonderfully thick forest belts down to the single trees that in some places are dotted here and there. The oil-palm would seem to have a will of its own in the selection of its favourite localities, but, taking the country as a whole, the quantities growing there are truly amazing; indeed, there seems no end to them, nor to their successors; for everywhere young palms of all sizes are to be seen near the parent trees, growing up amidst the tangle of vegetation.

The oil-palms being indigenous, plant themselves; either the shrivelled nuts fall out of the cone or they may be carried by the large monkeys and other animals or by big birds, especially



INDIGENOUS OIL PALM

This tree is probably about thirty-five years old. Its height from the ground to the crown of the stem under the fronds is 35 ft. 3 in.



by the black and white one known as the "banga bird" ("banga" being the Mendi for palm-nuts), all of which are very fond of the soft, oily pulp of the fruit that surrounds the hard shell of the kernel.

The illustration shows the very young plant still attached to the nut, which, when denuded of its oleaginous covering and quite dry, has some resemblance in miniature to the cocoanut.

The oil-palm is a most interesting botanical study, and its useful and valuable products certainly deserve very great attention; for undoubtedly some day, and that perhaps at no distant date, when scientific methods come into operation in regard to the mechanical treatment of its fruit, greatly extended areas of these prolific oil-bearing palms will be worked, and become available for commercial purposes.

Oil-palms grow to a considerable height; I think I may safely say that they can attain to about a hundred feet. The one in the picture measured to the crown 85 feet 3 inches, and allowing 15 feet for the tall leaves of the crown, we get a tree of 50 feet.

My idea is that a tree of 10 feet to the crown may be taken as being aged that number of years, and that a foot a year may be allowed for subsequent growth, so that the palm shown should approximately be thirty-five years old, and in its prime; for like human beings these trees have their relative degrees of condition, which they show in the comparative condition of their crops.

At my request the native we see in the picture ascended this tree, to enable me to measure it accurately, and also to cut out the cones of the fresh fruit, which, as is always the case, were partially concealed within the dark mass forming the crown.

These cones are very heavily set on a thick and exceedingly strong stem, and need a lot of dexterous chopping with the matchet carried by the man to detach them. He ascends by means of a climber or "barru," which consists of half-a-dozen stout flexible rattan canes bound together, and as soon as it is passed around both the tree and the man's body, the

ends, which are knobbed, are securely tied to prevent slipping. I have never heard of these ends coming apart, although accidents do sometimes occur by the man falling by missing his foot-hold, in spite of the precautions that are taken of placing fetish medicine (or saraka) in the bush to prevent mishaps. The medicine does not appear to be always infallible.

Having climbed to the crown he proceeds to chop away the dried leaves, and to hack off the cones which fall to the ground. These cones are of various weights and sizes. The photograph is a very typical one, and represents some excellent specimens just as they were cut from the tree. Their weights were respectively 50 lbs., 30 lbs., and 20 lbs.

It is curious to notice how the fresh fruit, which is all red when quite ripe, is set in between the spikes; only the surface fruit is visible, but the greater part is not seen as it is hidden behind the others, after the style of the different rows of teeth in the jaws of a large shark, until it reaches the great centre core. The quantity of oil-nuts that a single cone will contain is almost incredible; in one which weighed 34 lbs. I counted no less than 2360 of these oil-nuts. Of course they are not all as large as the surface fruit, but every one, I think, had a certain quantity of oil in it.

If the nuts are perfectly ripe it is enough merely to shake the cone, when many will drop out. The next thing is to chop away everything until the big centre core (which by a stretch of imagination may be likened to a low-crowned pine-apple) is reached, and to pick out the red nuts from the cuttings. Incidentally I may mention that this core is burned and is used as an alkali by the natives in the preparation of the country black soap, which is soft and exceedingly strong. It is much appreciated, as it does good work, and is in general use everywhere.

A country-law or "Poro" is placed upon the oil-palms at certain times to safeguard them against the wasteful cutting of the cones before the fruit has matured. And a most necessary precaution this is, because unless the fruit be left to ripen it will be deficient in the oleaginous substance forming the pericarp, although the kernel within the shell may be of a market-

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INDIGENOUS OIL PALMS

1. Inflorescence. 2. Cones of fresh fruit. 3. Cores of two cones.

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cones in the close time, it is quite evident, from the grotesque disproportion in the palm-oil exported, to the huge quantities of palm-kernels shipped, that an enormous amount of the oil can never be expressed at all, for a ripe fruit must, necessarily, have its oily pericarp, much of which must be lost; certainly it is not accounted for.

It is alleged by some, who perhaps have little practical knowledge of the fruit and of the aborigines, that this marked disparity is due in a great measure to the large quantities consumed for domestic purposes; but if this were so why does it not apply to the exports of these commodities from the Gold Coast and from Southern Nigeria? Those Colonies show an altogether different proportion of oil and kernels, and the percentages are consistent one with the other.

I prefer to attribute this shortage of palm-oil to the fact that the oil is not expressed; that the people cannot devote the necessary time to its preparation, and also that they have not the receptacles in which to carry it down for sale or barter from any considerable distance, either to a waterway or a railway station. The expressing of the oil from the pericarp is a long, tedious, back-breaking operation for the women; and it must be undertaken soon after the cutting of the cones, otherwise the oily pulp will get rotten and useless; while the kernels in the unbroken shells will remain sound for a very long time, and, in fact, are frequently stored away in "binkis" (which are simply strong, big country mats loosely rolled and placed upright on the mud verandahs of the huts or on the ground) for over two years before being broken.

The astonishing peculiarity of the fruit of the oil-palm is that it produces two distinct oils, used for two different purposes in Europe—palm-oil and palm-kernel oil. This is perhaps not generally known, and it will be better understood if as an illustration we substitute an ordinary ripe plum for the red oil-nut. In that case the flesh of the plum between the skin and the stone, will represent the soft substance from which the palm-oil is expressed. This oil is of a lovely red colour when freshly prepared and is then quite liquid, but

when the fruit has from a variety of causes been allowed to deteriorate, and is carelessly worked, the oil is much stiffer and assumes a dirty yellow colour.

It is the fresh, red oil that is used for cooking and other domestic purposes, while the coarser is exported and is in great demand in the making of soap, for railway grease, and for tinplate working in Wales and elsewhere.

After the fruit has been removed from the spiky cones it takes a few days before it can be dealt with. Several processes have to be gone through. It must be first spread out on the ground under the powerful sun and turned about for four or five days, then collected and stacked up, and after being wetted and covered with large leaves to induce fermentation, it presents, when uncovered after four days, a very mouldy appearance, and is so hot that it is impossible to keep one's hand in the heap for more than a few seconds. From this heap it is carried in small quantities to wooden mortars, in which it is vigorously pounded with long pestles by the women, assisted by the bigger girls. The mass is then turned out of the mortar and boiled, or is treated to applications of hot stones, when the oil will come away from the fibrous pulp and float upon the water, to be skimmed off and reboiled, until nothing but pure palm-oil remains. As I have shown, this is a long business; and when all is completed it is still only the pericarp that has been dealt with and from which the oil has been obtained.

The palm-nut, which contains the much-coveted kernel, has next to be treated, but this can be done at any convenient time, as there is nothing to spoil even if the shelling is not undertaken for a couple of years. The drier the shell the more brittle it is and the less difficult to break, one slight blow usually sufficing to set the kernel free, as would be the case with a well-dried Barcelona nut. But when it is remembered that every single shell has to be broken with a blow from a stone by hand, how such enormous cargoes of these kernels are got together is almost beyond one's comprehension; more especially if we consider that if an experienced woman obtains $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. weight of kernels in four hours' steady

application, she has done excellent work and will have such a pile of shells in front of her as will testify undoubtedly to what her labour has been.

When a sufficient quantity of nuts has been broken the kernels are packed into palm-leaf hampers and carried on the backs of men to a trader. Perhaps there will be a two-days' overland tramp before coming to a factory; all depends upon the locality, and whether it is in touch with a waterway or a railway station, where the merchants and traders are established in numbers. The more competition the better it is for the natives, as the regulation of the daily price for produce becomes a profound art, as inexplicable to a buyer as it is eminently satisfactory to the seller. The cable instructions from home, I have been often informed, are answerable in a great measure for the existing rivalry amongst the white firms, perhaps some half-dozen in number, and for the ever-recurring fluctuations in the local prices that are so confusing to the country people.

But at the best the native methods of obtaining these valuable and much-needed products are but sorry efforts compared with those a European or an American, who knows what could be made by the scientific machinery to which he is accustomed, would obtain. Nowadays with an up-to-date railway to take the produce down to the markets that are eagerly awaiting it, the contrast between the well-equipped trains and the slow country methods of preparing the produce strikes one as almost absurd. One cannot help feeling a pity for the aborigines, who, at present, know no better, and who must therefore be content to continue their primitive customs of dealing with their indigenous wealth, until the increasing demand for these products arouses some one or other of our great British manufacturers to the necessity of breaking down old-time barriers and trade obstructions, and of dealing with the raw material on the spot in a scientific way.

The cutting of the cones is most general during "brushing-farm time," that is, in March, when bush is being cleared for cultivation, the cutting being continued in the months of April, May, and June. The "Poro" is then placed upon the

trees for a close season and removed at the end of September, when cutting goes on again until the middle of December, and the "Poro" is again in force until March; so that for seven months out of the twelve, the palm-fruit is available, and is collected in enormous quantities, although still leaving tracts of oil-palm-bearing land practically untouched.

It is sometimes thought by inexperienced persons that in brushing or clearing bush for a cassada or rice farm by burning where the ground is studded by young palm trees, the great burning of bush cut down and lying upon the ground for the extensive bonfire, would tend to destroy the young palms which have been left standing with pruned leaves during the clearing operation. This, however, is a mistaken notion, for the young palms, although looking shrivelled and blackened after the fire, are not only not destroyed, but they have actually been strengthened and materially benefited by the fire which has been raging about them, but which has not penetrated any vital parts. This is one of the peculiar characteristics of the oil-palm and of native farming, in which firing plays so prominent a part, and forcibly strikes even an old observer as he passes these "mortihuns," as such clearings, after being fired, are termed.

Oil-palms are by no means the delicate and fragile trees they would appear to be; in fact, the natives say that it takes a very great deal to kill a palm tree, and that unless the "cabbage" is removed from the crown it will live to the full term of its natural life.

The oil-palms within a chiefdom can only be worked by the people belonging to it, a certain portion being allotted to the chiefs. The trees on a farm belong to the owner; those not on farms are the common property of the people, who can cut down the cones containing the palm-nuts where they please when the "Poro" is taken off the trees, that is, when the close time has passed, and the fruit is ripe.

When the "Poro" is about to be taken off the trees, "Saraka" is put about the bush to prevent the climbers from falling from them when they go up to cut down the cones. This "Saraka" may take the form of a large stone crossed and

re-crossed by the thin tie-tie vine, and hung to a stick resting on two short forked sticks stuck into the ground about a couple of feet apart. Sometimes one sees a low ant-hill surmounted by two cones of the nuts, but more frequently a short upright stick is noticed, upon which are strung bored pieces of stick of one size to the height of two feet or so, the sticks alternately crossed.

The following are the palms found most generally, although in parts of the Karene district I have seen large quantities of fan-palms which we do not see in Mendiland.

Torpoi. The ordinary palm, from the fruit of which oil is expressed and kernels obtained.

Keri. Potta-potta-palm, from which kajeh or piassava of a weak kind is made. It gives no wine. The leaves are used for thatching houses.

Duvui. The wine-palm proper; the best kind of piassava is obtained from the fleshy part of the leaf-stalk. It produces excellent fibre for string hammocks and for fine mats, while the mid-ribs of the leaves are utilised as rafters in ceilings to huts.

A fetish oil-palm grows in the Sa-Krim country by the Kase Lake which is held in superstitious reverence by the people, as it is said that there is a bad devil hiding beneath it. No person will attempt to climb it.

The superstition originated thus: A palm-nut cutter once ascended this tree, but upon his returning to the ground, he became sick, seemed paralysed, and shortly afterwards died.

The next cutter who went up met a big black snake lying right upon the "Banga" (palm-nut) cones; this so greatly alarmed the man that he was obliged to descend.

A third made the attempt, but, upon getting half-way up the stem, he suddenly became tired and was no longer able to grip the "baru" or climbing cane, and had to slide down the trunk of the tree.

Since that time no one has ventured to climb this palm for the fruit; it must drop down when over-ripe. Around this tree no farm is ever made, although it is now several years since it became recognised as a fetish tree.

Of all the anomalies in the treatment of native-grown articles of food that of rice is the most glaring.

Rice is one of the oldest, if not absolutely the most ancient of all food-stuffs known to the aborigines. It has been, and still is, grown in every part of the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone in a larger or smaller degree. Speaking generally, Sierra Leone is a rice-growing country; indeed it could easily be grown to any extent. It is one of the things the native thoroughly understands, but yet in spite of this we have to face the fact that large quantities of rice are annually imported into the Colony.

It is true that in 1906 and 1907 a considerable quantity was exported from Sierra Leone to the Windward and Leeward coasts, say about 839 and 1153 tons respectively, and that during the same years the returns to the United Kingdom show that 2 bushels and 13 bushels were received there, while on the other hand, the entire quantity imported into the Colony during the same period was 444 and 347 tons, the greater part being received from the United Kingdom.

It is admitted, I believe, by all Europeans at Sierra Leone that the native-grown rice is far and away better, as regards its nutritive properties, than any Indian or American imported rice, and several Europeans, I know as an absolute fact, not only use the country-rice themselves, but ship it home to their families, so much is it liked. And yet there is no market for it in England. This really does seem strange, and it would appear that there must be some trade reason why this African rice is tabooed from the British dinner-table. This reason ought to be discovered, and that without further delay; for the antiquated excuse that from imperfect cleaning in the primitive method in vogue amongst the people it was not so white as the rice generally sold in England, does not now apply, as that known as "American rice" is as white and clean-looking as any description that is imported into the Colony.

Of course there are several kinds of country-rice, some of which are of a reddish colour, and it is impossible by manual labour to get away all the skin; so I am willing to admit that this kind of rice, though perhaps having more nutritive



WOMEN CLEANING HUSK RICE
By means of a pestle and mortar, Mendiland.

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properties left in it, may not be quite pleasing to a fastidious British public; I am, however, more than persuaded that could this prejudice be overcome, we should soon find that a very large demand was springing up for it. It has always been a mystery, not only to myself but to many other users of every kind of Sierra Leone rice, why it has never been brought to the notice of the British public by some enterprising caterer. The public is not slow to appreciate a really nutritious article of food when it is put before it, and if the public were made to understand what their approval of that rice meant to the West African native, and also to their own constitutions, they would with their usual impartial and generous spirit give to it a fair and unbiassed trial; if it failed, we should at all events know that it had been impartially tried.

It may seem to most people, perhaps, very curious, and indeed ludicrous, to refer back to the year 1778, over a hundred and thirty years ago, for information upon such a simple subject as the growing of rice, indigo, and tobacco by the Africans, but it is well to do so in order that we may see what extreme apathy existed then, and has continued right up to the present time, in making these articles in common use amongst the people known to the commercial markets of the world.

In an essay on the "Impolicy of the African Slave Trade," by the Rev. T. Clarkson, M.A., in the year above mentioned, 1778, we read the following:

"Among the other articles which the African continent produces are tobacco, rice, and indigo, each of which would form of itself a distinct and valuable branch of trade.

"Tobacco is to be found in almost every division of this continent in the greatest luxuriance, and from the peculiar richness of the soil, is superior in quality to that which America produces.

"Rice is found in most parts of Africa, but it grows so luxuriantly on the Grain Coast in particular, that a supply might be drawn from thence sufficient for all the markets of Europe. It is extraordinary that this RICE should be finer

in flavour, of a greater substance, more wholesome and capable of preservation, than the rice of any other country whatever, and that in every point of view, it should be superior to the rest. Nor is the indigo of Africa, with which that continent abounds, less conspicuous for its pre-eminence in colour. The blue is so much more beautiful and permanent than that which is extracted from the same plant in other parts, that many have been led to doubt whether the African cloths brought into this country were dyed with indigo or not. They apprehended that the colour in these, which became more beautiful upon washing, must have proceeded from another weed, or have been extracted from some of the woods, which are celebrated for dyeing there. The matter, however, has been clearly ascertained. A gentleman procured two or three of the balls, which had been just prepared by the Africans for use. He brought them home, and in a very simple state.

“The reader may imagine by my account of the productions of Africa hitherto named, and my statement of their superiority to others, that I have been dealing in fiction, rather than describing their real state. But it is well known that Africa possesses the most fertile soil of any in the globe; and I appeal to those who have visited this coast, and to some of the manufacturing towns in Great Britain, if my assertions are not strictly true; if the rice of Africa is not beyond all others in point of flavour, substance, and capacity of preservation; and if the indigo is not of that beautiful, permanent nature, as to have a title to the pre-eminence ascribed.”

If we go further into the causes of the non-exportation of West African rice we shall in all likelihood be told that trial shipments have been made to Liverpool, that the results were not satisfactory, and that it would not pay. I take it that the only reason why it would not pay is because it has never been brought to the notice of the public; that its undoubted nutritive properties have not received that publicity which they demand, and which would fully justify the importation of this cereal.

The subject is one of too much consequence to the poorer classes of this and other countries to be lightly dealt with, and

inexplicable, the more so when they remember that practically unlimited quantities could, and I believe would, be grown, were sufficient encouragement offered to the people to plant it both for increased local trade and for exportation. I am convinced that with such encouragement it could be grown and sold at prices that would compare favourably with any rice at present imported from other countries and now offered on the open European markets.

There must necessarily be an immense difference in machine-cleaned rice and that cleaned by the laborious pestle and mortar method of the native women and children, apart from the great waste occasioned, and the breaking up of the grains in the long and tedious operation which it undergoes in the pounding. No sort of power-machinery for dealing with this cereal exists at the present time at Sierra Leone. Machines worked by manual power have been tried but they have not given satisfaction, as the rotating of the handles by men was found to be too spasmodic and irregular to maintain a uniform and sufficient speed. So long as it could be kept up, the husk rice came through fairly well hulled, but the moment there was the slightest slackening, which occurred every few seconds, the machine ceased to be of service and the rice came through practically in the same condition as when it was put into the hopper.

I am enabled to state this from my own observations, for with that liberality which is one of the great characteristics of Sir Alfred Jones¹—a name so well known in connection with the West Coast of Africa—in his endeavours to minimise the waste of labour which might be applied to other uses, he presented to me at considerable cost an American manual rice-shelling machine for experimental purposes. I had this machine put together and gave numerous exhibitions of its workings before the European merchants and traders at Bonthe, Sherbro, as well as before the country people, with the result before stated. The slower the speed the less the cleaning, clearly proving that manual machines worked by natives

¹ The death of Sir Alfred Jones occurred on December 13, 1900.

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the shipping companies if they could get those large cargoes of rice that are practically within their grasp.

The safe storing of early rice grown in the "bata" or swampy ground and called "kor bati," which is only a small crop for local consumption, is naturally a matter of very serious importance during the months of the rainy season (when the big crops are still growing), which extend from about the middle of May until November, when the new rice is available. The methods of storing adopted by the people of the Messe Krim and Sa Krim countries on the Kittam River and on the Kase Lake in the Sherbro, are most primitive and peculiarly interesting.

The photograph here shown was taken by me in July 1903 at Massa, the residential town of Queen Messi. It depicts some women who have just returned in the dug-out canoes from a visit to the storage places near by, called in the Krim language "Kang."

These curious places are put up during April and May upon dry land quite close to the town, land that in the rainy season becomes entirely covered by water to some depth. They are small stores roughly fenced in and lined with palm leaves. The rice after being harvested is tied up in little sheaves, which are carefully packed within these leafy places, and covered over with the long grass ordinarily used for thatching or by more palm leaves.

These simple precautions are taken to prevent the rice from sprouting, for by this plan it will remain sound for some months.

When it is necessary, after the Kang or storehouse has been closed, to re-open it for the purpose of removing any of the rice for domestic use or for any other purpose, it must be done in accordance with very stringent regulations.

Superstition protects the store and threatens those who re-enter it, except under certain conditions, with penalties I cannot very well particularise here. Disregard of these prescribed rules, it is thought, will cause the fish, which everywhere abound, to burst through the leafy walls of the Kang and consume the rice; so that it can be readily imagined that the chiefs are not slow to put their own Poro or law on the storehouses, and find superstition a useful aid in maintaining the security of the Kangs.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE KOLA TREE

THE kola-nut has always been a very favourite fruit with the natives; but great as the consumption is with the people all over Sierra Leone, there is an enormous quantity exported to Bathurst, Gambia, Daka, and Senegal, as will be seen from the figures given in the Blue Book.

The kola tree grows to a considerable size and bears a large dark-green pod, which may be seen hanging down sometimes in clusters of three or more. Many of these pods are six or seven inches long and massive in proportion, containing frequently over a dozen nuts. The word "nuts," however, would appear to be rather a misnomer, as they have no hard shell, but are covered by a deliciously smooth waxy-like skin, which, when peeled off, exposes a fleshy pink nut, three sides of which are usually quite smooth from the way in which they are packed together, the other side, that next the thick rind, being more or less convex.

When these nuts have arrived at maturity they are excessively bitter to the taste, and the majority of Europeans do not relish them, as the flavour reminds them so much of the too familiar quinine.

But when one has become accustomed to the habit of now and again eating a kola, the flavour is rather pleasant and the nut probably may be beneficial. At all events, following on the lines of the people of the country, I have come to regard the kola as a very useful addition to one's daily dietary when travelling about in the bush; and kola being an excellent tonic, I have no doubt that the natives are right in their constant use of it.

consumption is that it acts as a preventive against thirst, and also that it enables watchmen and others engaged in night work to keep awake. Possibly there may be some truth in this, or it may be a mere superstition, or it may perhaps apply to the trade with Senegal, for it is said that the greater quantity imported into Daka is taken across the dry Sahara. But no such reason could be needed in any part of Sierra Leone, where there is usually a plethora of water throughout the country.

Although the kola when in a mature state is so exceedingly bitter, when eaten quite young it is soft and delicious. I tried them very recently, and was much surprised to find them such good eating. A pod about three inches in length was picked and brought to me; out of curiosity I opened it and tried one of the nuts, which I found so excellent that I speedily consumed the eight that were in the pod. It occurred to me at the time that in that state they might make an inviting kind of pickle. I had never heard any one speak of very young kolas, but my own experience of them is that they are certainly most excellent eating, and to my thinking there is about as much difference between young and old kolas as there is between the tough old cocoanut and its gelatinous young one which requires to be eaten with a spoon.

The cultivation of kola trees is greatly extending, for whereas in former days they were met with only in small numbers at the approaches to towns, nowadays long groves of them may frequently be seen. As the demand for them increases and the natives realise what good returns they bring in, every care is taken of the trees, and the fetish oracle is invoked to induce the trees to give more abundant crops. All kinds of little charmed "medicine" may be seen hanging from the lower boughs, and usually a "Saraka" of some kind of cloth is tied round the trunk of the tree to cause a superabundance of fruit, and these "Sarakas" are supplemented by various fetishes; amongst many others I have noticed the following:

1. On the ground under the trees three sticks about three feet long tied together in the form of a tripod, in the opening

has been spooled.

Naturally the country people are not slow to abandon their cotton industry, and with it the beautiful subdued tints of their vegetable dyes, for the more easily obtained trade yarns with their harsh but vivid hues, that immediately take their fancy.

Thus we see another old-time native industry with its historic associations rapidly passing away.

In my early travels through Upper Mendi I was very much impressed with the fine posts of camwood, both tall and thick, which I found were used by the great chiefs in the building of their barris or palaver houses. The camwood tree is also met with in the lower countries near the Coast. It has for years past formed an article of trade, and has been brought in by the natives to the traders in small quantities and in very short pieces, mostly old roots, and workable commercially only for knife-handles and for dye.

Its great weight and the want of overland transport precluded anything of size being obtained; but when the railway penetrated the centre of the forests, towards the terminus of the line about Baiima, where the camwood tree flourishes, a trade at once set in; and I was exceedingly pleased on making my first acquaintance with the railway at that terminus in 1907 to observe heaps of magnificent baulks of camwood stacked up ready for conveyance to Freetown. The size was so large, the diameter, in some cases up to 14 inches, so much wider than anything I had previously seen, and the red colour so rich, that I stood in amazement and thought I saw this beautiful wood at last appreciated on the European markets.

I noticed great quantities of camwood at various stations between Bo and Baiima ready for transport; and the traders informed me it was coming in well, and fetching a price acceptable to the native woodcutters and to themselves. This exquisite wood is tremendously hard and extraordinarily heavy. When the trunk is cut and the sapwood surrounding it is chopped away, the heart, which is the wood of commerce, is



NATIVE WOMAN SPINNING COUNTRY-GROWN COTTON

Notice the fetish charm or sebbe hanging from her arm. Mendiland.

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work. It is now said that the country is capable of producing jute, but jute requires cultivation; the other fibres are all indigenous.

Of course where Nature has been so lavish the natives are content with what they find to hand; it needs the European intelligence to see what further wealth could be produced by cultivation, and to discover the uses to which the cultivated article could be applied, as well as a knowledge of the markets in which it could be sold. Unfortunately experience in cultivation of other things has not been encouraging hitherto, for the losses on coffee still rankle in the minds of too many. It would seem that markets fall with amazing rapidity as soon as anything in quantity is produced, and of course natives do not understand fluctuation in prices when the tendencies are downward, although they are quite ready to accept any rise in price. In this perhaps they are not singular.

Let us see how the native prepares his fibre for his trapping nets.

Sitting upon the ground with a quantity of green palm-leaves by his side he proceeds to pull away the leaflets from the mid-rib, then placing a leaflet across his bare leg, with one hand he bends over the pointed end, which breaks the skin and enables him with the other to strip it off, exposing a few strands of fibre. He treats two other leaflets in the same way, spreading the three sets of fibre on his leg. Dividing this fibre he first rolls one half on his leg and then the other. The two strands are then rolled on the bare leg together, forming a tough cord capable of bearing a very great strain without parting, and which it would be impossible to break with your hand. Although the method of making it is so primitive the cord is so perfectly made that to look at it you would think it was turned out by machinery.

CHAPTER XXXVI

CONCLUSION

SIERRA LEONE has been, until lately, a very unprogressive Colony, and it would doubtless have remained so had the Government not effected the pacification of the country by undertaking its control.

In the commercial world, however, much as the form has changed the original spirit largely remains. That spirit we may call "grooviness," as it is characterised by a rigid determination to keep to the old and deeply cut ruts.

But these grooves, venerable as they are, have become too narrow for the new and rapidly expanding life which, owing to the action of the Government, is evidently stirring in the Sierra Leone of to-day. They should be widened, and in the interests of commerce the leading of the Government in its attempts to develop the Colony by the opening up of fresh fields should be followed.

It is possible, and indeed probable, that before long the attention of certain British manufacturers, who carry on gigantic businesses in articles of everyday consumption, may be directed towards the oil-palm belts of Sierra Leone in their endeavours to increase their supply of the raw material they need. Under certain conditions they might be disposed to deal by scientific processes with the oil-palm products, to some extent on the actual ground of the oil-belts themselves; at the root of the tree, so to speak.

They would deal with this natural produce not as traders who have to sell it again, but as users, requiring it as raw material for their own purposes, and not putting it on to the market until they did so as ingredients of their manufactured articles.

It is well that here the distinction between the merchant and the manufacturer should be thoroughly understood. The merchants are not manufacturers, but it is the manufacturers who have been and still are the purchasers of their produce.

The manufacturers who could deal with the oil-palm by scientific methods which alone would make its produce available to the full extent, have still to discover the mechanical processes that are needed. The discovery, however, can only be a matter of time. I have said "to the full extent," but we have yet to learn what that "full extent" really means. No one can explore the oil-palm belts without being conscious that, given mechanical treatment, the output would be beyond conception.

The demand for fat-yielding substances as ingredients of many domestic commodities has now become so pressing throughout the manufacturing world that a means of getting greatly increased supplies must be discovered, and that shortly.

Nature has lavishly provided the trees, it is for man to find out how to use their produce to the fullest advantage. In so doing, great and profitable employment would be given to numbers of able-bodied natives, who have now so much difficulty in making a living, that they cannot withstand the inducements held out by the German colonies further down the Coast to enter their military service, and, therefore, surreptitiously leave their own country.

The manufacturers who could deal with the palm tree by scientific methods, should, it seems to me, be encouraged by the Government to do so, and every assistance rendered to them.

I do not, of course, mean pecuniary assistance, for manufacturers who would be desirous of taking up such great industries, must of necessity be wealthy and well able to afford the outlay of an enormous capital, and it is only such firms that could hope for success; but the assistance I mean is in facilities by way of reasonable concessions and fixity of tenure; for no real business house would embark their own capital to so large an extent unless their tenure were secured by the

Government for a sufficiently long period to safeguard their expenditure.

The merchants might, it is true, at first regard such concessions as infringements of their ancient rights; but I venture to think that the increased circulation of money would ultimately prove to be not only for the good of the people but of the merchants themselves.

The plain facts of the case appear to me as follows:

1. There is at present within the Colony and Protectorate an untold amount of oil-palm produce absolutely unworked and consequently wasted.

2. It cannot be worked by the old-fashioned native methods.

3. The merchants and traders, European and others, are all apparently averse from any interference with these inadequate methods:

4. Consequently without new blood, new ideas, and modern scientific methods the oil-palm products must continue to be wasted.

We cannot blame any one for this state of things; in every civilised country we were confronted by the same difficulties when machinery first took the place of manual labour. Time has solved these problems for the civilised world, and in all probability time will eventually do the same for Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, up yonder in the great oil-belts of the Protectorate the stuff that British manufacturers are needing so urgently, and for which they are willing to work and to pay, is still rotting, while the pick of native labour is drifting out of the country.

In the future, and may that future be near, the question of how to deal with this wasted produce will no doubt be solved; but until that time comes, when we speak of the Sierra Leone of to-day, we shall be obliged to add, and the vast stores of its undeveloped wealth lost to commerce in its unworked oil-palm belts.

Maize is doing well at Lagos and in other parts of Southern Nigeria. In Sierra Leone it has been grown as long as I can

remember in a desultory manner simply for a small local consumption. What is to hinder a great industry being made in this article, which is so much wanted for the home markets?

Cassada is grown everywhere and gives prolific crops, besides being one of the principal articles of native food. It is in general use by the Creoles as starch, and if we may judge of its qualities from the perfection of their laundry work, it must indeed be a valuable commodity which hitherto has received no commercial notice.

Native-grown tobacco, as I have already mentioned, may be considered as being almost extinct owing to the flooding of the country with the American unmanufactured article; but under proper supervision and preparation of the leaf one would think that there is a future for its cultivation.

The cultivation of the sugar-cane would undoubtedly succeed if undertaken on modern lines. Throughout Mendi-land, at Sherbro, and in the villages around Sierra Leone and elsewhere, sugar-canes are constantly in evidence, although only in small quantities. They always look healthy, strong, and of good size, and when offered for sale in the public markets are eagerly bought up, being much liked by the people for "chawing."

Coffee is another article that has behaved very cruelly to the people, mostly Sierra Leoneans; much money has been lost in its cultivation as it does not pay the producers. This is much to be regretted, for the berry grows magnificently, and to my mind supplies a stimulating, aromatic, and excellent beverage. However, while the price is so low on the European markets this coffee remains taboo from the British breakfast-table, but there is no reason, as far as I have seen, why this fine coffee in its pure condition should not be retailed in England at one shilling a pound, and find a steady appreciation from all who like a good cup of coffee at a cheap rate.

Botanically, the rubber vines have been common enough generally throughout the Hinterland in old and big vegetation, but the natives have greatly destroyed them in the

clearing of land for farming purposes, and the exports of rubber have dwindled down materially. Therefore, to obtain rubber in the future, it will be necessary to cultivate large areas of land under European supervision, and with European money, as is being done with such signal success in our other tropical Colonies.

Hitherto the Colony and Protectorate of Sierra Leone has shown nothing—if we except iron—of mineral or metallurgical importance. I am not, however, aware that any serious attempt has been made by qualified experts to ascertain the presence of valuable metals, minerals, and precious stones; but judging from the absence of native gold ornaments amongst the aboriginal tribes, one would infer that, at all events, no alluvial gold is to be found, whatever might hereafter be disclosed were experiments undertaken with a view of working the different descriptions of quartziferous ground to be constantly met with throughout the Protectorate.

Lastly, let me mention the great success of West Africa, cocoa.

Cocoa has for some few years past been most successfully grown on the Gold Coast by the natives. It is quite a modern industry there, but it has been taken up vigorously by the people, with magnificent results; what is to prevent the introduction of cocoa-growing in the Hinterland of Sierra Leone? Cocoa-growing has been taken up on the Gold Coast by the aborigines themselves; they have themselves reaped the profits, and they are large, of this industry, hence its splendid success. If in Sierra Leone agriculture or any other industry is to do really well the aborigines must feel that it pays them. If they find they are making money they will not fail to work with enthusiasm. Make it worth their while and there will be no need to blame them for slackness; but with the African, as with other people, the price must be right. The secret of success in dealing with most men is the very simple rule: Make it worth their while.

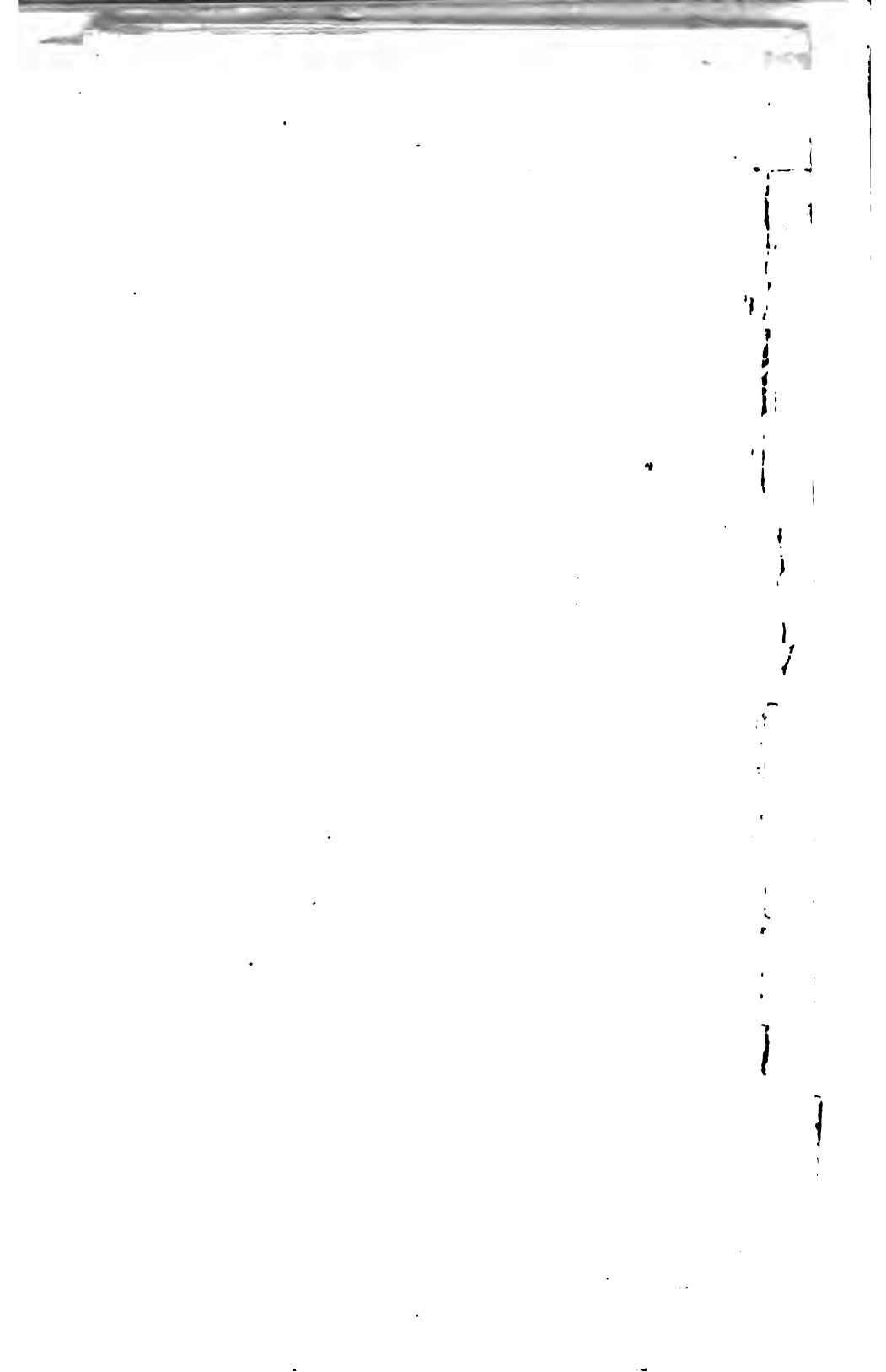
In spite, however, of all drawbacks, including the restricted area of the Colony and Protectorate, the volume of exports and imports has increased by leaps and bounds during the last few

years since the Hinterland has been under the control of the Government, and the revenue has grown in like proportion.

The position of Sierra Leone to-day, financially and commercially, certainly redounds to the credit of the Government. Its sound policy and able local administration under the ever-watchful eye of the Colonial Office has brought about the extraordinary transformation that is everywhere apparent, and which must become intensified as mechanical and scientific improvements are introduced for the saving of now wasted labour, and its transference to agricultural pursuits and other works of industrial utility. This will, no doubt, in due season eventuate; so for the time being it may only be necessary to express unstinted appreciation of the extraordinary and civilising changes that have been made. These changes appear to me hard to realise, when I remember, as I ever must remember, the death-cloud that for so long a time hovered over Sierra Leone, a name formerly heard by most persons with horror. That the Government should have transformed that once dreaded place, if not exactly into a health resort, at all events into a British Colony in which European residence is now not only possible, but even enjoyable on the salubrious hills, alike to white men and to white women for the period of their twelve months' official stay on the West African Coast, is, I venture to repeat, to me at least, hard to realise.

For many years past I have spoken of West Africa as a coming country; and it would certainly seem, that given time, my predictions will be verified. Recent experiences have confirmed my faith, and with a well-founded hope for its future prosperity I will bring to a close my observations upon

THE TRANSFORMED COLONY OF SIERRA LEONE.



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